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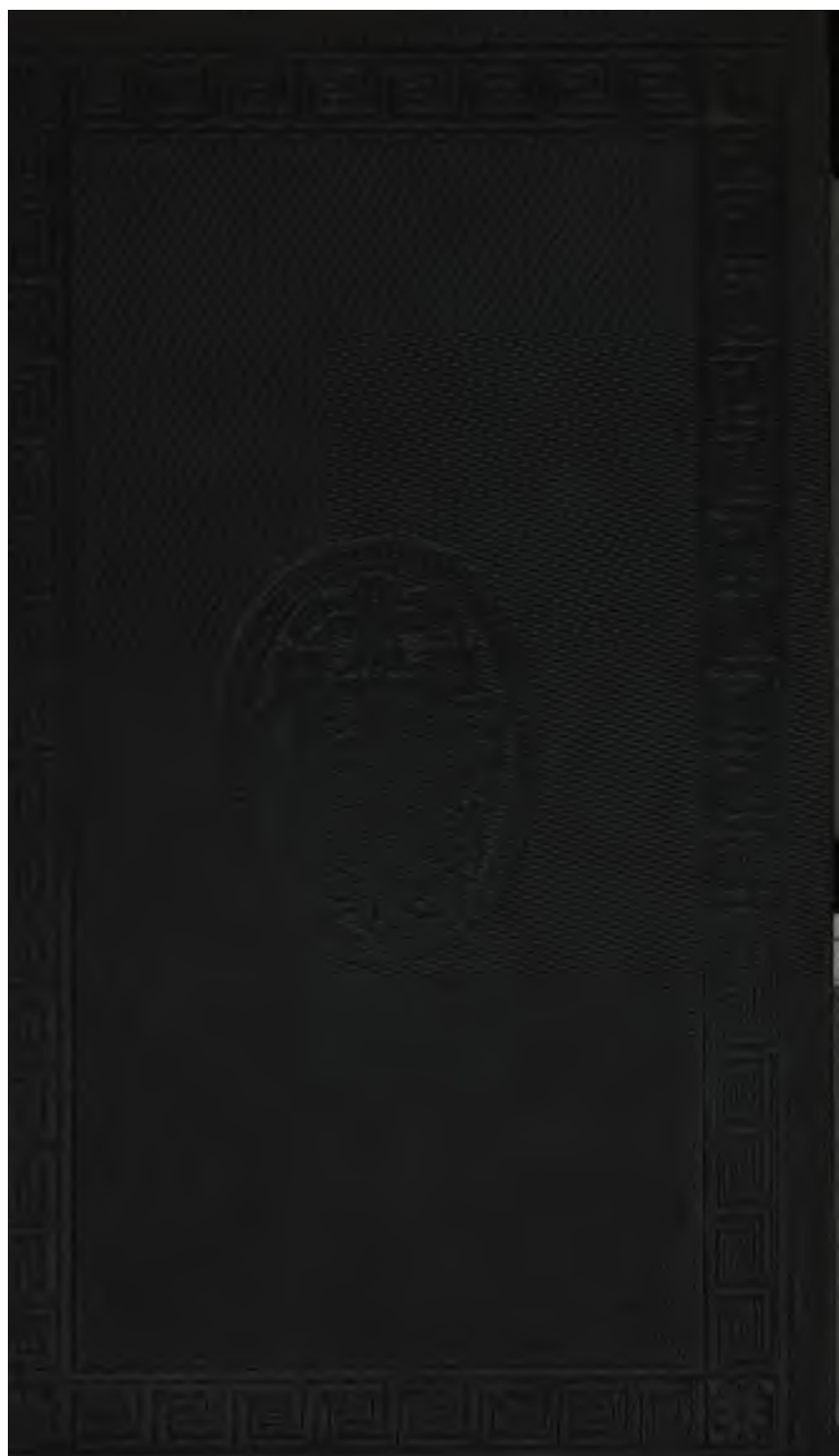
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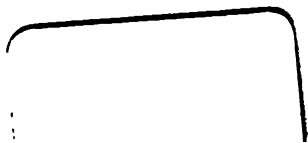
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ERNEST MILMAN;

A TALE OF MANCHESTER LIFE.

BY



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ERNEST MILMAN,

&c. &c.

CHAPTER I.

“ You have called about your son, I presume, Mrs. Milman,” said Mr. Brownlow, addressing a lady who had for some time been waiting to see him, but to whom he had been unable to attend before.

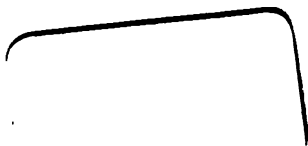
“ I mentioned your application to my partner, and we have agreed to take—let me see—what is his name ?”

“ Ernest,” said Mrs. Milman.

“ Ernest—yes, Ernest. The name had escaped my memory. Well, we have agreed



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an agreement, when we engage an apprentice, stating the terms on which we take him, the number of years over which the engagement extends, and the nature of the instruction that we purpose affording him, in return for services rendered for a term of years, at what is in reality only a nominal salary. It is merely a written paper, signed by the engaging parties, nothing legally binding about it, simply a matter of form. You would not object, I presume, to sign such an agreement?

“Certainly not,” said Mrs. Milman.

“Nor you, Ernest?”

“No, sir.”


“Very well; then if you will sit down for a few minutes, Mrs. Milman, I will draw up the form, which will only require our respective signatures to be binding in honour, though not in law; and after I have read it over, Ernest can make out a copy, which you can take home with you.”

For five minutes or so, no sound was heard in the counting-house, save the scratching of the quill-pen on the paper, which Mr.

Brownlow speedily covered with a blotched mass of hieroglyphics, and from which, when he had finished writing, he read as follows:

“Memorandum of agreement between Brownlow and Stanton, of Manchester, in the first part, Mrs. Anne Milman, in the second part, and Ernest Milman, her son, in the third part.

“That Brownlow and Stanton agree to take Ernest Milman as their apprentice, as a Manchester Warehouseman, for the term of five years, on the following terms; viz. That Brownlow and Stanton agree to pay Ernest Milman £5 for the first year, £10 for the second, £15 for the third, £20 for the fourth, and £25 for the fifth year, respectively; and that during the said term, Mrs. Anne Milman agrees to find her son board and residence, also clothes suitable for his occupation; and Brownlow and Stanton agree to teach the said apprentice in all matters and things pertaining to their business as Manchester Warehousemen, which are necessary to make the said apprentice a



good man of business. As witness our hands, this 10th day of October, 1848."

"This is our usual mode of drawing up the agreement, Mrs. Milman; but if you have any suggestion to make, any objection to raise against the wording of the sentences, or any desire to insert additional clauses, pray state your wish, and I will endeavour to recompose it in a manner more satisfactory to you."

"Thank you, Mr. Brownlow; but I do not think that it could be better," replied Mrs. Milman. "Nothing is omitted that I should wish to have put in; neither is anything inserted that does not in every way meet with my approval. You are satisfied, are you not, Ernest?" turning to her son.

"Quite so," replied Ernest.

"And ready to sign this paper, binding yourself to serve Messrs. Brownlow and Stanton well and faithfully for five years, at the salary named?"

"Quite ready," Mamma.

"Then I think," continued Mrs. Milman, again addressing Mr. Brownlow, "that as

the mode of drawing-up the agreement is perfectly satisfactory to all parties concerned, we may as well affix our signatures at once."

"Very well, madam; I will sign first, then you, and afterwards your son."

Accordingly, after Mr. Brownlow had with his stick-like quill-pen appended the imposing signature of Brownlow and Stanton to the almost illegible document, Mrs. Milman wrote, in her sharp-pointed lady-like hand, Anne Milman; and beneath that again was traced, in neat, round, carefully-formed characters, the name of Ernest Milman.

"There, sir," said Mr. Brownlow to Ernest, as, after looking about in vain for a penwiper, he laid down his wet pen on the ink-stained desk; "you have taken the first step in life—you have by your own act and deed bound yourself to us for five years, to do whatever we order you. As far as we are concerned, you will never have cause to regret this. We shall require you to do nothing but what is just and reasonable, and what all who are now, or have ever been

engaged in our service, have been obliged to do in their turns. If you strive to serve us to the best of your ability, if you execute carefully, and with expedition, the commissions with which you may be charged; if you endeavour, instead of lolling and lounging about, like the majority of young men, to acquire a knowledge of the business, and to become, as it is expressed in the agreement which you have just signed, an efficient man of business; then, if, during the whole of your apprenticeship, you have always striven to make our interests your own, we shall be able and willing to give you a good salary, and one that will increase in proportion as you make yourself valuable to us. A young man who has always conducted himself well, and who has by industry and attention acquired a first-rate knowledge of business, and made himself so useful to his employers, that they cannot possibly do without him, is in a position to command almost any salary that he may think proper to ask. Therefore, Ernest, be steady, be industrious, be attentive, and you will as surely rise to a

high and responsible position, as—as it is certain that you stand in this counting-house. You know the old proverb, Ernest—Industry merits reward—and it gets it too, remember that.”

“ I will remember it, sir,” said Ernest, speaking in an unusually animated tone ; for Mr. Brownlow’s words had already caused bright hopes of the future to spring up in his youthful breast.

“ I will remember it, and I will, by unwearied attention to business, deserve the reward that the proverb you have quoted says industry merits ; and that you say you are ready and willing to give to those whose conduct has always been blameless, and whose energies have for years been directed to the advancement of your interests.”

“ You will not find us backward in fulfilling our promises,” said Mr. Brownlow, speaking, however, in a colder tone than that in which he had hitherto addressed Ernest ; for the bearing of the youth, and the fearless manner in which he had avowed his intention of deserving the promotion so tempt-

ingly held out to him, had caused misgivings, as to his ability to crush down the self-reliant spirit of his new apprentice, to rise in the despotic mind of the hitherto unthwarted merchant. "Deserve advancement, and we shall advance you; your prospects for the future depend entirely upon yourself."

"And now you must excuse me, Mrs. Milman, as I have other matters to attend to. All our business is, I think, settled. You took a copy of the agreement, did you not, Ernest?"

"I did, sir."

"Very good—then I will say good morning, Mrs. Milman. You will be here on Monday morning, at half-past eight, Ernest."

"I will sir, punctually."

"Good morning then, good morning!" And the rich and prosperous merchant bowed out the friendless widow and her fatherless son.

Mr. Brownlow, as soon as they were gone, sat down on his stool, saying to himself; humph!—well, kind words and fair promises cost nothing, at all events—that is

a comfort. That lad took me up rather suddenly; but he will at the end of five years have forgotten all that I have this morning said to him. If he has not done so, but reminds me of the promises of advancement that I made him, and calls upon me to make them good, why—I'll dismiss him, that's all. And having formed this charitable determination, the merchant turned round to his desk and re-commenced writing.

CHAPTER II.

MRS. MILMAN and Ernest left Mr. Brownlow's office, thinking that the rich and prosperous trader was a generous and kind-hearted man. The fond mother imagined that her son would inevitably rise to a high position, and that, at the end of his apprenticeship, his employers would offer him a handsome salary; for had not Mr. Brownlow said that if Ernest devoted all his energies to the promotion of the firm's interests, the remuneration that he would receive would be regulated by the nature of the services rendered? Had he not also told them, that if Ernest exerted himself to ac-

quire a first-rate knowledge of business, he would be in a position to demand almost any salary? And Ernest would exert himself, there was no doubt of that; he would work, toil, struggle on for years, and at the end of the long apprenticeship would be a good man of business, and could call upon the merchants he had served so well, to make good their promises and to reward him as he deserved. And would they not do so? Mr. Brownlow had said that they would. He was a gentleman and a man of honour, whose word was his bond. On 'Change he stood high—very high. He was looked up to by his brother merchants; and, on all business questions, was regarded as an authority. Oh! it was a capital place for Ernest; he could not possibly have met with anything better.

“You like the idea of going to Brownlow and Stanton's; do you not, Ernest dear?” said the musing parent, now speaking aloud, and addressing her thoughtful son.

“Yes, mamma; I think that I shall like

it," replied he, gravely, " pretty well at least. It will seem strange at first, you know ; but in time I shall get accustomed to the bustle and the noise ; and Mr. Brownlow speaks so kindly, and holds out such bright prospects ! does not he mamma ?"

" He does indeed, Ernest," replied Mrs. Milman. " And my boy will, I am sure, do his best to please him, and exert himself to deserve the promised reward."

" If I have life, and health, and strength, mamma, I will give satisfaction to my employers ; and, in studying to promote their interests, will advance my own."

" How high you may raise yourself, Ernest, by your own exertions, it is impossible to say," said the pleased mother. " Neither Mr. Brownlow nor Mr. Stanton have sons of their own ; and you may, in the course of years, be made a partner—who knows ?"

" As I said to Mr. Brownlow, mamma, I will do my very, very best. I will work on, on, on, always looking a-head ; difficulties shall not daunt me ; disappointments

shall not cause me to waver in my onward course. If I fail in endeavouring to obtain wealth and position, it shall not be for want of striving, at any rate, mamma."

"He who helps himself, Ernest dear, God will help," said Mrs. Milman. "May He who watches over and provides for the widow and the fatherless, guide, protect, comfort, and support you, my son—my all!"

"He will, mamma, He will," said Ernest, deeply moved. "With a Heavenly Father and an angel mother, what need I fear?"

The husband of Mrs. Milman, and the father of Ernest, had been, up to the period of his death, engaged in commercial pursuits. For five and twenty years he had toiled on, hopefully looking forward to the day on which, after having by his own exertions secured a competency, he might retire altogether from business, and remove to his native village, there to spend the remainder of his days amid the less-exciting scenes of country life.

About two years before the period at

which our tale commences, Mr. Milman, having amassed a considerable fortune, began to make arrangements for withdrawing from the firm, in which, for many years, he had been a partner. Before, however, finally winding up his affairs, an opportunity presented itself, by seizing which it appeared more than probable that he might make a considerable addition to the wealth that he had already accumulated. The spirit of enterprise which more or less exists in the breast of every good man of business, prompted him to engage in this seemingly safe speculation ; whilst his more cautious nature warned him that he had already money enough—why need he try to get more ? However, the undertaking seemed so perfectly safe, and likely to be so extremely profitable, that he could not resist the temptation of investing in it a considerable portion of his hard-earned wealth, fondly imagining, poor fellow, that he would receive it all back again, and a large sum of money in addition.

Such was not to be the case, however.



The bubble—for the whole affair was a complete bubble—burst. The whole of the fortune (for the surplus money had been lent to a friend, by whom it had, unknown to the lender, been risked in the same speculation); the whole of the fortune amassed in five and twenty long years, the fruit of toil, labour, and anxiety, was swept away, and Mr. Milman was ruined—utterly, irretrievably ruined.

The blow was too much for him. He staggered under it, sickened, and died, leaving his wife and son totally unprovided for.


Unprovided for! The reader who has never known adversity is incapable of understanding fully what these words mean. The chill feeling of utter desolation that sweeps over the soul, when you hear that you are penniless and know not where to turn for help, is unknown to him. He imagines that the persons left unprovided for, will have to give up their carriage, will have to move to a smaller house, will have to economise, and to deny themselves certain luxuries

to which, in their more prosperous days, they had been accustomed. He supposes that they will not have so much money to spend, and that, therefore, they will not be able to live in the same style, to dress so well, or to give such good dinner and dancing parties. But he cannot conceive that "unprovided for" means that the persons who have experienced such a reverse of fortune will soon be houseless, breadless, friendless, unless something totally unexpected happens, or unless the family, over whom the black mantle of poverty has fallen, can see a way in which, by their united exertions, an honest livelihood may be obtained. Never having known practically the meaning of the word poverty, he cannot for a single moment picture to himself the misery, the struggling, the vain endeavour to make both ends meet, the heart-sinking, and the black despair, which have been experienced in all their intense bitterness by those who have felt what it is to be poor, and who have known adversity in its sternest, truest, most unattractive form,

For some weeks after her husband's death, Mrs. Milman was utterly incapable of exertion ; but, on recovering from the grief-caused stupor into which she had fallen, the necessity of entering upon some course of life, by which a livelihood for herself and for her son might be obtained, presented itself to her view. Work she must ; but what could she do ? Keep a school ! There were already in the neighbourhood in which she lived, more schools than were required ; and to commence one, or rather to endeavour to commence one, in a district in which she was unknown, would be the height of folly. No ; a school was out of the question. Companion to a lady ! What then would become of her son ? He was too young to go to business ; besides, he would require a home, where a loving mother would watch over and tend him, as none but a mother could or would do. A repository, or shop, for the sale of fancy work, Berlin wools, &c. and a circulating library—all in one ! There were already five such places—four too many.

After thinking, reflecting, and thinking again, the only thing that she could do appeared to be, to take lodgers—the most harassing and anxiety-causing employment in which a destitute woman can possibly engage. But there was no help for it. Ernest must be fed and clothed as well as herself; and, with nerves braced up and with a hopeful heart, she commenced her life anew.

So different was it from what she had always been accustomed to, that frequently she cried for hours, whilst Ernest was at school, after having met with annoyances and insults from people whom she felt to be so immeasurably inferior to herself; but who, having money, thought themselves privileged to act in any manner that they thought proper. Such persons are to be detested, to be despised, to be spurned; for in their narrow minds there dwells not a spark of fine feeling, and no true-hearted man can respect or esteem that being who takes advantage of a widow's helplessness to lord it over, to browbeat, and to insult her.




Such people, despicable, little-minded, mean, do exist, and ought to be regarded by every right-thinking man with loathing and detestation ; for a widow has always a claim upon the man calling himself a gentleman, and he who refuses to acknowledge that claim, is fit only for the society of cravens and unmanly beings, who know not the name of honour, and in whose breasts there lurks not a feeling or an emotion beyond those experienced by brute beasts.

For two long, weary years had Mrs. Milman dragged on her existence, bravely fighting against annoyances, and bearing up under disappointments numerous and severe enough to have entirely crushed the spirit out of an ordinary woman, but which served only to rouse up Mrs. Milman, and stimulate her to still greater exertions. It is true that she had sometimes fits of despondency, and that occasionally she almost despaired of ever emerging from the state of poverty into which she had fallen ; but these feelings were only transitory, and passed away when Ernest returned from school, and, throwing

his arms around his mother's neck, told her how he had taken the first place in his class—and how he had been praised by the master for the correct manner in which his exercise had been composed, and the neatness with which it had been written—and how hard he intended to work for the prize which Mr. Monton had promised to the boy who had been most diligent in his studies during the half-year.

As the fond mother gazed upon her boy—her earthly all—the cloud that had hung over her spirit passed away, and the sunlight of joy illumed her pale, and, before his coming, sad face.

And could she help, as she looked at the bright, intelligent, upturned countenance, prophesying for the industrious, studious boy, a career prosperous and honourable to himself, and gratifying to her who had watched over him so anxiously from the first moment that he drew breath? She could not help it;—what mother could? In the presence of her darling son, all her troubles were forgotten, and all her disagree-




ables made light of; for, were they not endured for his sake?

It is said that a mother can undergo anything for her children, and it is true; for her love is boundless, illimitable, inexhaustible. Truly there is no love like the love of a mother.

When Ernest, at the age of fourteen, left school, Mrs. Milman, who had for some time been looking about for a situation for him, applied to Mr. Brownlow, with whom her husband had been acquainted; and the result was, that that gentleman engaged him for a term of years, as we have already seen. This was almost more than Mrs. Milman had dared to hope. Her son had taken, as she imagined, the first step on the high-road to fortune. The future looked bright and promising, and the hardships of the present time would therefore be easier to bear.

Hope!—what a freshness does it fling over what has hitherto been dark and dreary, and with what beauty does it invest things that, without it, would be so unattractive—so wretchedly burdensome.




Mother and son hoped—hoped separately—hoped together; and the future with its fair prospects seemed all the brighter, because the past had been so dark and so unspeakably sorrow-fraught.

The history of Mr. Brownlow can be told in a few words.


He came—a strong, country lad—to Manchester, ready to do anything. He procured a situation in a warehouse, and rose from one thing to another, until he became a traveller. He succeeded in getting together a connection, and, at the age of twenty-seven, entered into business on his own account, in partnership with Mr. Stanton. By daily, hourly attention to business, and by the exercise of commercial shrewdness, they made money, and took a high place amongst the Manchester merchants.

In 1848, when Ernest Milman entered their service, they had been in business twenty years, and had amassed large fortunes; but habit had become second nature, and, though they had accumulated wealth, they



never thought of retiring in order to make room for younger and less-wealthy men. They were living illustrations of the saying, "Much will have more."

Mr. Stanton, the partner of Mr. Brownlow, came, at the age of twenty, from one of the midland counties, where he had been for some years in a draper's shop. On reaching Manchester, he procured, through the influence of a connection, a situation as salesman in a large mercantile establishment. For ten years he worked steadily on, saving money, and making friends with the buyers who came to the market. Having become acquainted with Mr. Brownlow, they mutually agreed to commence business on their own account. They took a small warehouse, stocked it, put up a sign in a conspicuous position, on which Brownlow and Stanton shone in all the brightness of new gilt, engaged a good traveller, sold their goods cheap, did the greater part of the work, for the first two or three years, themselves, and prospered as they deserved to do. Having gained the confidence of



their customers, they engaged in larger operations, took more extensive premises, and—in commercial phrase—did the trade.

The partners worked well together. What one did not know, the other did ; and so between them they got on capitally. The success that they had met with had, however, hardened their hearts ; and, in their pride at having amassed wealth, and at having attained to a high position amongst the great merchants of the town, they forgot that there was a God who had granted them health and strength, without which they might have been paupers, or, at any rate, men acquainted with poverty. Such thoughts however never crossed their minds. They were rich ; that was a fact. They had amassed those riches by their own exertions ; that was another. And so they jingled their money in their pockets, held their heads high, looked down with scorn upon those who were not so well off as themselves, ate, drank, and were merry.

They never for one moment thought that the riches they had accumulated were simply

talents entrusted to their care by God, to whom one day they would have to render an account of the manner in which they had been used. The money had been earned by them, and the money should be spent and enjoyed, or hoarded up, by them. This was their creed ; this their determination. The poor, the oppressed, and the destitute, had no claim upon them ; for, had they not earned their money ?—and might not they do what they liked with their own—spend it, hoard it, add to it, as they pleased ?

Such were the men to whom Ernest Milman was apprenticed for five years.

CHAPTER III.

IN a handsomely furnished dining-room, sat, sipping their wine after dinner, a lady and a gentleman, both of middle age. A discussion was apparently being carried on; for the lady, Mrs. Wilson, continuing a train of argument, was endeavouring to persuade her husband that their son Henry was specially designed by nature for a profession, instead of a commercial life; in favour of which Mr. Wilson entertained strong opinions.

“ You know, my dear,” said she, “ that, to a youth possessing the abilities that Henry undoubtedly does, commerce offers no scope.

There is no room for him to display his talents. In trade, men of the most ordinary capacity have the same opportunities of rising, as those who are endowed with superior intellects. Education, refinement, gentlemanly manners, are disadvantages rather than otherwise to a trader. For, in the course of business, he must necessarily meet with men—with customers—whose minds are uncultivated, and to whom he will have to play the agreeable, for the sake of the orders that he can get out of them. O, George, do not—do not, I beg of you, bind Henry—my high-spirited, noble-hearted boy—to that horrid, horrid business !

“Horrid business, eh !” exclaimed the stout, comfortable-looking, bald-headed Mr. Wilson, as he slowly raised his wine-glass, in order, first, to admire the beautiful clearness and colour of its contents, and then to convey it to his mouth ; whence, after having disposed of the ruby-coloured wine, he removed it, and, with a satisfied “humph,” replaced it on the table—“Horrid business, eh ! Pray, Madam, where would you have

been, if it had not been for that horrid business, I should like to know? In the workhouse, probably; or some place very similar. Profession! pooh—a profession is not worth that—” said the retired merchant, snapping his fingers. “ Profession, indeed! For a man of energy, determination, and spirit, to voluntarily become a parson—a white-neck-clothed, long-tail-coated fellow, with a face like a diseased turnip or a bladder of lard, fit only to preach and talk to a lot of women, to snivel, and sneak, and cant, whilst, all the time that he is talking about charity, self-denial, mortification of the flesh, and God knows what, he has an eye to the brass, and squints about for a girl whose father has got money. By Jove, if I had a daughter, and a parson were to come sneaking after her, I’d precious soon send the fellow to the right-about—a miserable, tuft-hunting, dinner-eating, psalm-singing, idle vagabond. No—none of your parsons for me.

“ Then there’s a lawyer—another profession that you call a gentlemanly occupation forsooth. Why, the most wretched

scavenger that sweeps the streets does not do such dirty work as a lawyer. He dabbles in every mess that he can possibly contrive to get his fingers into. He lies, and cheats, and swindles; tells you one thing whilst he means another; and shakes your hand whilst he picks your pocket. He grubs, and grubs, and grubs on, until he grubs into his grave, and there's an end of him."

"But there is the Bar, you know, George," suggested Mrs. Wilson. "There is nothing mean or shabby at the Bar."

"Bar be damned," replied the affectionate husband, who had been rapidly lashing himself into a passion. "Bar! better sell beer in a tap-room than plead for murderers, thieves, and swindlers—than endeavour to convince a gaping jury that the black-hearted, devil-like parricide is a perfect model of a man—a pattern for sons to imitate; and a being, the purity of whose life has been unsullied by even a thought of evil, much less stained indelibly by the commission of a crime which none but a fiend could conceive, or an inhabitant of hell perpetrate."

“ Bar, Madam ; Bar ! Do you wish your son to become a man, ready and willing to be hired by the scum of the earth, for the purpose of rescuing from the hands of justice, by the arts of eloquence and legal subtlety, wretches guilty of every crime that can stain man ; and steeped to the very lips in blood, theft, and every hell-born sin ? Do you wish him to prove—if he has the ability, which I very much doubt, although you are so fully convinced of his great, his brilliant, his extraordinary talents—do you wish him to prove that black is white—that vice is virtue—that murderers are angels—that thieves have been, are, and ever will be, honest men—that drunkards are tee-total-ers—that harlots are modest virgins—that women who have been beaten to death by their brutal husbands died natural deaths—that children who have been pitched into the canal by their erring mothers were seen, actually seen, to fall over the parapet on which they had been left sitting for a moment, whilst the loving parent went into a neighbouring shop to purchase some house-

hold necessary? You wish your son to twist, and turn, and lie, and equivocate, and steep his very soul in untruths, until, by constant practice, he has forgotten what truth is. You wish him to do all this, do you, Madam—and to wind up his defence of a crime-stained wretch, by telling the jury, in an indirect manner, that he, the barrister, is a wise man, and open-eyed; whilst they, the jurymen, are fools and blind idiots? Upon my soul, Madam, but you have got taste with a vengeance.

“ And then there’s a Physician, or a Surgeon, another gentlemanly occupation—a fellow who spends his days in prescribing for imaginary ailments, to the filling of his own pocket, and the emptying of that of his patient. A man—a two-handed, two-legged, strong-limbed man—to pass his life in feeling pulses, stating his opinion in pompous tones and precise sentences—that it beats irregularly—that perfect quiet is necessary—that he will send a lotion, or a box of pills—the one water, the other flour; and that, after a week’s confinement to the house, he would

recommend a month's residence at Harrogate, to drink the stinking waters; or at Blackpool, Southport, or perchance Leamington, should his patient be a fashionable, do-nothing, idle, gad-about lady. Why, such a fellow picks your pocket as he asks after your health; for he charges a guinea, or something of the kind, for putting his thumb upon your wrist. Rather dear, by Jove! Dick Turpin was a prince, compared to a thieving surgeon; for he did ask politely for a man's money, but a doctor doesn't ask—he takes it—he helps himself as cheeky as possible. No, Madam, my son shall never be either a parson, a lawyer—a barrister, I beg your pardon—or a surgeon; for they are all humbugs, from beginning to end. He shall be a merchant—an honourable, upright, steady-going, shabby-action-avoiding merchant. All men who are good for anything, are, or have been, merchants. I have been a merchant myself, Madam.

“Now, let us hear no more about it. Henry shall be in trade; that's poz—so make up your mind to that. Now, don't

fret; but—pass the bottle. Where the devil you get your notions about professions being more gentlemanly than trade, I can't conceive. You've been reading some trashy novels, I suppose—damn them."

Some minutes passed over, and the talked-down Mrs. Wilson scarcely dared to lift up her head. At last, however, she ventured to look up; and, glancing at her husband, saw that he was drinking wine furiously. He had also made an onslaught upon a sponge cake that Mrs. Wilson had avoided cutting into herself; for she had intended it for her darling Henry, on the following day, which was to be spent with a pic-nic party in a lovely glen, some six miles from home.

The fact of the sponge cake having been cut into, and half eaten, roused the slumbering ire of Mrs. Wilson, and encouraged her to try again to persuade her obstinate husband to listen to reason, and to place the pride of her heart in a gentlemanly profession.

"George, my dear," mildly commenced she, addressing the exhausted champion of

trade, and eternal enemy of professions—
“George, my dear.”

“Well, what’s the matter now?” asked that gentleman, with his mouth half-full of cake, soaked in port wine.

“As you appear to have such an insuperable dislike to the professions you have named, love, what do you think of the Army? You might purchase a commission for Henry—an ensigncy, or something of the kind, you know—and, with his talents, he would be sure to be promoted.”

“Good God, Madam!”—shouted the angry husband, as he ejected the wet cake from his mouth upon the fawn-coloured silk dress of his irritating wife—“do you wish to drive me mad with your eternal plaguing? Now just listen to me, once for all. If ever you bore me about that lad again as you have bored me this afternoon, I’ll pack him off to sea. Understand that. Army, indeed! army! A soldier—a red-coated butcher. Not that I’m a peace-man. I hate and despise peace-men, with their pitiful notions; but no son of mine shall be a soldier. Let

those fight who can do nothing else—who are unable to make money in trade. Soldier! Why the very name is enough. If he be rich, he is a fop; if poor, a scamp. No, no. I am British to the back-bone. I gave two hundred pounds to the Patriotic Fund, and I'll do it again, if necessary; but I won't let a son of mine enter the Army, if I can help it. Trade, Madam; trade is the pursuit for a man of energy. Trade is the pursuit for a man of spirit. Trade is the pursuit for a man, Madam; a man, not a two-legged monkey.

“And now send Henry to me. You have not been stuffing him with any of your ridiculous notions, I hope?”

“No, George, I have not;” meekly answered the now completely settled Mrs. Wilson.

“Very well. Send the lad to me.”

In a few minutes Henry came in: rather a good-looking boy, of about fifteen.

“Now, Sir,” began Mr. Wilson, addressing him, “your mother and I have

been talking about you. It is high time that you should begin to learn some business, by which you may hereafter earn your own living. I shall write to an old friend of mine to-night, Mr. Graham, of whom you may have heard me speak, asking him to take you into his warehouse. Have you anything to say about this arrangement?"

"No, papa, nothing," replied Henry; for he knew very well that his father would not listen to him, if he had.

"Very well — then go and tell your mother that she may as well commence making preparations for your leaving home at once; for, in a week from now, you will probably be settled in Manchester."

As soon as Henry had left the room, Mr. Wilson drew his writing-folio towards him, and wrote as follows:

"Ambleside, Oct. 15, 1848.

"Dear Graham,

"I have a lad, about fifteen, whom I

should like to place under your care. Can you make room for him in your warehouse, do you think?

“Faithfully yours,

“GEO. WILSON.

“C. B. GRAHAM, Esq.
Manchester.”

By return of post came a note from Mr. Graham.

“Manchester, Oct. 16, 1848:

“My dear Wilson,

“I have a vacancy in my warehouse for a youth, about the age of your son; so that I shall be glad if you will let him come to me at once. My compliments to Mrs. Wilson.

“Yours truly,

“C. B. GRAHAM.

“GEO. WILSON, Esq.
Ambleside.”

On the second day after the receipt of the above letter, Mr. Wilson took his son to Manchester; and, on the following morning, Henry commenced life as an entering-clerk in the office of C. B. Graham and Co.

CHAPTER IV.

PUNCTUALLY at half-past eight, on the eventful Monday morning, Ernest presented himself at the door of Messrs. Brownlow and Stanton's warehouse. As the principals seldom came to business until nine o'clock, or after, he had to introduce himself as the new apprentice. Several young men, who were lounging about in the counting-houses and packing-room—for there was never anything to do until the letters were opened—came towards him, and began to eye him over. One of them, an untidy looking fellow, began a conversation by saying,

“And what is your name, eh?”

"My name, sir, is Milman," replied Ernest.

"Milman, is it? oh, I thought that Green was your name."

"Why so, sir, may I ask?" said Ernest.

"Because you look so precious green—that's why."

"I am sorry that my appearance does not please you, sir; but perhaps you have a faculty for discovering anything that resembles grass in colour."

"Why, yes, I flatter myself that I know green when I see it," replied the young man.

"Asses generally do," retorted Ernest, as he turned away.


For half-an-hour or so, the new lad in the counting-house was the centre of attraction. Salesmen, book-keepers, stock-keepers, packers, porters, and errand-lads, must all come and gaze at Ernest, as though they had never seen a youth of fourteen before.

He, on his part, as he looked at the group of young men and lads, thought that they looked a very untidy set; with their coats unbrushed and out at elbows, and their

hats and caps dirty and dust-covered. Were these the young men in high positions of whom Mr. Brownlow had spoken? They did not look as if they were in the receipt of good salaries, or as if they held responsible situations.

Soon after nine, Mr. Brownlow arrived. The moment the "governor" made his appearance, the young men, who had been standing about in small groups, talking, dispersed. Some went one way and some another. In a few moments the coast was clear. Ernest thought that it would be better to wait until Mr. Brownlow had opened the letters, before he informed that gentleman that he was ready to commence work; and, therefore, sat still upon his stool.

Presently Mr. Brownlow shouted, "Hanley." "Hanley," cried one young man; "Hanley," shouted another; "Hanley," yelled a third; "Hanley," "Hanley," until the noise seemed loud enough to cause all the dead Hanleys to rise from their graves, and all the living ones to crowd to



one point, and ask what the deuce was the matter.

"Yes, sir," said a breathless individual, who, after the lapse of a few seconds, rushed into the private office; "Yes, sir; did you want me, sir?"

"Do you think that I should call you if I did not want you, dolt?" replied the amiable governor. "Take this letter, read it over carefully, then execute the order, and see that the goods go off all right."

"Very good, sir," said Hanley.

"Do you understand thoroughly what you have got to do, sir? clearly, distinctly, unmistakeably, understand how those goods are to be looked out?"

"I understand perfectly, sir," replied the young man.

"Then go and set about your work at once, sir," roared Mr. Brownlow. "Don't stand gaping there like a country gawkey, or a moon-struck idiot."

Hanley vanished.

There was silence for a few minutes, and

then "Mason," "Mason," was the cry that resounded through the place.

Mason flew down stairs, for Hanley had told him that the governor was like a bear with a sore head, and would stand no gammon he was sure.

When he entered the counting-house, Mr. Brownlow, without turning round, said, "that list, Mason—where is that list that I told you to make out last night?"

"List sir, list — what list, sir?" asked Mason.

"What list, sir?" cried the hot-tempered merchant, "what list, sir? why that list of prints that I ordered you to make out."

"I—I—I've not made it out yet, sir?"

"Then why the devil have not you, sir."

"I—I had no time, Mr. Brownlow; for I had to cut some patterns for Lipton and Co. that had to go off by the first train, sir."

(The fact was, that he had been deeply engaged in reading an instructive book, entitled "The Lovers, or The History of a Heart;" a work that, in sublimity of com-

position, if Mason were to be believed, banged Shakespeare and Milton hollow.)

"Patterns be damned!" swore the enraged merchant. "When I tell you to do a thing, do it, and let me have no shuffling. Go and make out that list at once, sir. And, I say, Mason," added he, as the delinquent was quietly creeping away, "if I ever catch you again neglecting to execute my orders, patterns or no patterns, I'll discharge you on the spot; understand that. How much salary are you in receipt of, sir?"

"Fifty pounds," tremblingly answered Mason, who saw what was coming.

"Fifty pounds, eh! ten pounds too much. You will draw forty for the future. There, you may go now."

Mason hesitated.

Mr. Brownlow, who had turned to his desk, happening to look round, saw the poor fellow standing in the door-way. He instantly burst out with, "what, sir, not gone yet! By Jove, sir, if you stand there twiddling your thumbs for one moment longer, I'll lower your salary to thirty pounds!"

Mason, to use a common phrase, hooked it. When he arrived at the top of the first flight of stairs, where six or seven of the young men employed in the warehouse were waiting for him, he, with blanched cheeks, and in a voice tremulous with agitation, told them that there had been an awful row; that his screw had been docked ten pounds; that the governor shook the bag at him; and that they would all be sacked before the year was out, he was certain of that.

All this time Ernest had been listening in amazement to the oaths, the yells, and the threats, that were so plentifully poured forth by Mr. Brownlow. He could not have conceived it possible that the courteous merchant could swear in such a manner, or that the gentlemanly trader could give utterance to such speeches.

Recovering, however, in some degree from his astonishment, he ventured, as there appeared to be a lull in the storm, to knock at the door of the private office.

"Come in," said Mr. Brownlow.

Ernest went in.

education and knowledge, to do nothing better than fill gum-pots and dust counters? Why, the most ignorant scholar in any Sunday-school in the town could do such things as well, perhaps much better than I can! Poor mamma, she little thinks that her son is so degraded. But I will not tell her. I will make all look as bright as possible, for mamma has troubles enough of her own, without having to bear my annoyances in addition. Poor mamma, I must endure anything for her sake, for she has gone through a great deal for me.

At eleven o'clock, Mr. Spence, twisting round on his stool, said, "You had better go to the post now, Milman. Always go about this time. You will find the bag, and the card with the box number on, in the second drawer from the bottom, to the right of where you sit. Give the bag to the clerk at the office, and he will put the letters in, and fasten the clasp. Make as much haste as you can back; do you hear?"

"Yes, sir," answered Ernest.

"Very well—off with you."

When Ernest reached the post-office, the clerks were just preparing to deliver the letters. Hundreds of men, youths, and boys, were crowding together in the narrow passage before the boxes. Poor Ernest stood no chance of getting his letters until all who were stronger than he had obtained theirs.

Quarter-of-an-hour passed away, and yet he dare not venture into the midst of the struggling crowd, that heaved and swayed about before the little window, at which he was to present his bag. Whilst wondering how long it would be before the fierce crush would cease, Mr. Spence came hurrying up, and saluted him with,

“Why, Milman, what the deuce are you skulking there for, instead of trying to get your letters? Mr. Brownlow is raging like a mad bull. By Jove, my lad, you’ll catch it when you get back, see if you don’t. Here, give me the bag;” and, snatching it out of Ernest’s hand, he threw himself into the crowd, and shoved, and puffed, and blew, and struggled, until he succeeded in obtaining the letters.

When Ernest went back to the warehouse, Mr. Brownlow met him on the steps, and said : " This is a pretty beginning, upon my word, Milman. Here have I been waiting half-an-hour beyond the usual time for my letters. Never let this occur again, or I shall have something to say to you that you wont like to hear."

Poor Ernest ! when he went home to dinner, his heart was very full. He felt that he had got into a situation that would never, never suit him ; everybody was so coarse, so vulgar, so unfeeling. And Mr. Brownlow — the gentlemanly, kind, Mr. Brownlow — what a brute he was ; how black he looked, and how awfully he sometimes swore. Very different indeed, very different, was everything to what he had expected to find it.

On reaching home, he was met at the door by Mrs. Milman, who asked him, anxiously, how he thought he should like business ? With a forced smile, the brave boy answered : " Oh, pretty well, mamma, I think. It is rather strange just at first, you

know ; but when I get accustomed to it, I shall like it very much, I have no doubt."


Beneath that smiling face, however, there beat an aching heart.

CHAPTER V.

HENRY WILSON commenced life about the same time as Ernest Milman. He, however, had not to undergo the same disagreeables ; for his father was rich ; and though Mr. Graham professed to treat all the youths in his warehouse alike, rich and poor, yet somehow or another the poor got the greater part of the work to do, and the rich escaped doing any thing in the way of counter-dusting, gumpot-filling, Cockpithill-pie-fetching, and various other little matters of a similar nature. Very strange, was it not, that in an establishment where all were equal, according to the private office oracle, there

should still exist a difference of rank, as it were, between the youth whose pocket was well lined, and he who scarcely knew that he had a pocket, for he had never any thing to put into it? Yet so it was. The poor youths did the work, as the poor always have to do, and the rich ones shirked the work, as they invariably try to do.

Never mind, my poor reader; never mind. It is better to work than to be idle. He who in his youth has to drudge, and slave, and toil, will—if he be made of proper stuff—pass, in the race of life, the rich, the pampered, and the ease-loving man, with whom he started on comparatively easy terms. Think of this; and when your spirits droop, and the future looks dark and gloomy, rouse yourself, shake off that feeling of despondency, and hopefully look forward to the not very distant day, when you shall reap the fruit of your labours, when you shall have the proud satisfaction of looking back upon your past struggles, and reflecting that all you have gained has been the result of your own unaided, unassisted, persever-



ing exertions. A proud day indeed is that for a toil-worn man, on which he reaches the goal for which he has striven so long. The man who has never known what it is to work, and toil, and strive, and labour, and struggle, cannot entertain an idea of the pleasureable feelings that animate the mind of one who has fought valiantly in the battle of life, and has come out unscathed and unconquered, to enjoy the repose that he has deserved so well.

Under all your disagreeables, annoyances, and vexations, then, hard to endure though they may be, bear up with a manly, energetic, and determined spirit. Look your troubles in the face, and they will vanish before your steady gaze. Put your shoulder to the wheel, and go to work like a man. Mr. Graham had not, like Messrs. Brownlow and Stanton, made the whole of his fortune in business. When a young man, he had been taken into partnership by his father, who, at his death, left the whole of his wealth to Charles, his eldest son. In addition to this, Mr. Graham had married a lady

possessed of a handsome fortune. By speculation also he had realised large sums ; so that, when Henry Wilson entered his service, his wealth was almost incalculable. Like the majority of commercial men, he was unable to tear himself away from his beloved business. Habits, acquired during a lifetime spent in pursuit of gain, could not be broken off ; for they had become a part, as it were, of his very nature. If he had retired from active life, he would have been completely miserable ; his time would have hung upon his hands ; he would have been utterly at a loss how to employ the energies that had hitherto been engaged in controlling the affairs of a large establishment. He would have wandered about, moping, discontented, and dissatisfied with every thing, and every body that happened to come in his way. As it was, however, he was an active, hard-working, good-tempered—when nothing occurred to put him in a passion,—healthy-looking, cigar-abhorring, loud-speaking Manchester merchant. Dressed in respectable black—for he detested colours,—he looked—

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standing with his back to the fire, his coat-tails tucked up, his hands in his pockets, and his hat resting on the back of his head—the very picture of a successful self-satisfied trader. His broad red face looked as if he were accustomed to the good things of this world; whilst the quickness and agility with which he moved about, proved that he never indulged so far as to incapacitate himself for attending to business. Drunkenness was a vice that he abhorred; for it rendered a man unable to attend to business, and was therefore an evil to be shunned. He never viewed it as a sin, as a downfalling of man to the level of brute beasts; no, he simply regarded it as a hindrance to the proper discharge of commercial duties. Manchester men—Manchester mill-owners especially—invariably regard things in this light. So long as persons employed by them present themselves in the morning at a stated time, they care not if they have been reeling about the streets overnight, swearing, cursing, blaspheming, more like devils than aught else, more like brute beasts than men. Care—

why should they care? The employed may drink, and drink, and drink, until they have drunk their insides away. They may wallow in beastly sins until they become ten thousand times worse than filth-loving swine. They may steep their very souls in blackest wickedness until all that is human appears to have been expunged from their now fiend-like natures. They may sin, and rot, and die—and do employers care? No.

Women and girls are also treated in the same manner. They may frequent gin-shops, and reel about the open streets, with babes clinging to their breasts, shrieking, screaming, yelling, all on fire with the cursed drink that they have imbibed in those gaudy hells. They may sell their virtue for money to procure more—more—more of that scorching, blasting, burning liquid that sends so many immortal souls to an eternal hell. They may curse, and swear, and blaspheme, and yell out oaths, the very sound of which would almost make a devil shudder. They may unsex themselves. They may lose the woman in the fiend. They may slide down-

wards—downwards — downwards — shrieking, yelling, howling, screaming, crying, until they reach that blazing, flaming hell, into which, with one last, long, appalling shriek, that seems to rend the very skies, they disappear, there to spend an eternity of woe—a never-ending existence of unutterable misery, amid sin-stained, perchance crime-dyed, devils like themselves.

Do employers care? Not they. Hands are employed by them at certain wages. Hands are compelled to do a certain amount of work for those wages; and when that work is done, the employer has done with his hands, and they may all go to hell as fast as they like, and by any road that they may think proper.

O men, men, men! think. Picture to yourselves your own condition, when, at the last day, each soul sent to an eternal hell through your means shall rise and bear witness to your crushing, tyrannizing, slave-driving system, that sends the almost starving workman or workwoman to the gin-shop, there to drown his or her cares in drink,

there to stifle his or her hunger-pangs in quaffing hell-distilled liquor, that soon causes the poor wretches to rave like demons, and to rush and reel about, blaspheming and cursing, as if they were—which indeed is the case—devil-possessed.

How will you look then, think you—with the prospect of a seven-times heated corner in the flaming hell, whither you have sent so many hundreds of drink-destroyed beings, staring you in the face?

For have you not sent them? If you had paid them fair and equitable wages, wages sufficient to purchase food and clothes, wages sufficient to enable them to keep a roof, however humble, over their heads—would they have been driven by your tyranny to the ginshop to drive away care? No. If they had never been driven by your tyranny to the ginshop, would they ever have got drunk? No. If they had never got drunk, but had, out of mill-hours, been instructed, by teachers appointed by you, in religion, in morality, in temperance, in frugality, in everything that tends to elevate, instead of debase, the working-man, would they ever

have gone to hell? No, no, no; a thousand times no! Therefore, you are responsible for those lost souls. You might have saved them, if you would but have stretched out a finger. You might have directed them heavenwards, instead of hurling them hellwards, as you have done. But you drank your claret—stroked your well-filled paunch—and, as you reclined in your easy-chair, said, Poor devils! I get my work done as cheap as I can; I pay my hands their money—though it isn't much, I must say; and then I have done with them;—hah-hah-hah! Man, the devils will echo that hah-hah-hah! when, in a few short years—perchance days—perchance hours—they seize upon you, and, hurling you into the innermost recess of hell—where the blaze is most fierce—where the flames rise highest—and where the heat is most intense—dance with fiendish joy around you, as they watch you writhe, and twist, and turn in agony unutterable, unendurable, yet still eternal, never ending, lasting for ever—for ever!

To return to Mr. Graham. In all

matters of business, he conducted himself in an upright, honourable, and merchant-like manner. No shuffling, no underhand work, no shabby dealing for him. The man who could be guilty of a meanness in business, he declared, was unworthy of the name of merchant. Such a man ought to be shunned, to be avoided, to be sent to Coventry. Yet, though Mr. Graham had so many good points about him, his heart was as hard as a stone. Of feeling he was destitute. Money, money, money was the one thought that engrossed his mind. How to make it, how to invest it, how to lay it out profitably. And yet he had more money than he could possibly spend, if he were to live many, many years. He had no one to leave his wealth to ; for his wife had died soon after marriage, and he was childless. Money, however, he worshipped for its own sake. Like scores of Manchester men, he set up mammon as his god, fell down and worshipped it.

As a master, he was liberal, paying good salaries, because he thought it was the most

politic course to pursue. The work was done better than it would have been if he had been in the habit of giving his clerks and warehousemen poor salaries; for they knew that they could not get more elsewhere, and therefore did what they had to do thoroughly and well. This proved him to be a sensible man. The majority of Manchester merchants very foolishly imagine, that if they can engage a staff of servants at low rates of remuneration, they are doing the thing cheap, and therefore putting the difference between low and high salaries into their own pockets. This is quite a mistake. The employed, knowing that they are ill-paid, knowing also that they can at any time command the paltry salaries of which they are in receipt, do the work carelessly, do not strive to do everything in the very best manner, are indifferent, indolent, reckless; for, say they, what is the use of working hard when we get paid such wretched screws?

Instead, therefore, of being a cheaper, it is in reality a much dearer system. No

master, prudent, sensible, far-seeing, result-anticipating, will ever pay persons employed by him poor salaries; for he will know that it is injudicious in the highest degree—that, viewed in every way, it is unwise—that it shows a want of sound judgment, and evinces business incapacity.

Men of little minds, self-sufficient, consequential, big in their own eyes, may screw down their servants and pay them wretchedly; but such men never get on; they never take places in the front ranks; they never do a first-rate trade; they potter, and screw, and grub on, and fancy themselves leading men; whilst, in fact, they are not fit to black the shoes of those who in reality are the wise, the prudent, and the judicious merchants.

On first arriving in Manchester, Henry Wilson looked with dismay at the immense factories and gigantic warehouses, amidst which he was to spend perhaps the whole of his future life. Contrasted with Ambleside, everything looked so black, so smoky, so miserably dirty, — the men and women

whom he met in the streets, pale, wan, emaciated, toil-worn, and hunger-thinned, looked so very different to the rosy-cheeked, stout-limbed country people whom he used to meet in his walks near home,—that he felt as if he had come to live in a new world. The lodgings also that his father had procured for him looked so uncomfortable, so unlike home, that he felt, when his father left him, as if he were alone in the world. And yet how much better off was he than many hundreds of youths who annually come to Manchester for the purpose of making their fortunes! (Poor wretches! they will soon awake from that dream. Things are not now what they were thirty years since.) He was well-supplied with money. He had comforts, luxuries in abundance; although, accustomed as he had been to the profusion at home, he did not view them in that light. Henry Wilson was not the youth, however, to stay in the house, reading or employing his time in a profitable manner, whilst places of amusement were open, or whilst excitement of any kind could be obtained. The

theatre, the casino, the dancing saloons, all had attractions peculiar to themselves—at-
tractions all-powerful to the mind of an ima-
ginative youth released from all restraint.
Having from childhood been indulged in
every whim and wish, he was not likely, on
being left to follow his own devices, to deny
himself anything for which he felt a long-
ing. Introduced by a youth in Mr. Gra-
ham's office to all sorts of places, to every
species of wickedness, he soon distanced his
tutor, and in twelve months had acquired a
practical knowledge of all those vices that
tend to lower men to the level of brutes.
He never, however, neglected his business,
and therefore his conduct was highly satis-
factory to Mr. Graham, who, writing to Mr.
Wilson one day, said that Henry was a
perfect model for young men to imitate,
that he had never the least fault to find with
him, and that he wished all his young men
were as attentive to their duties.


Of his mode of living out of business
hours, he cared nothing. What was it to
him if Henry Wilson spread, and drank,

and made a fool and a beast of himself? Nothing. So long as he attended to business properly, he—Mr. Graham—had nothing whatever to do with his private life.

Thus did Ernest Milman and Henry Wilson commence life. The one poor; the other rich. The one grave, earnest, steady, thoughtful; the other gay, flighty, reckless, thought-hating, and despising what he termed "a slow fellow." The one slowly, painfully toiling onwards, upwards; the other dashing down headlong on the road to ruin.

CHAPTER VI.

ERNEST MILMAN had not been very long with Brownlow and Stanton, before he found out that he had made a great mistake in entering their service. But it was done; the step was taken, and there was no going back. For five long, weary years would he have to remain with them; there was no help for it. And yet was it to his disadvantage that he had made an engagement with Brownlow and Stanton? What else could he have done? Being poor, a professional education was quite out of the question. And even if he had been wealthy, or at any rate moderately well off, would a



professional life have suited him better than a mercantile one? Could he have risen to eminence as a physician, or a lawyer, or have succeeded in realising the idea that he entertained of what a clergyman ought to be? He knew not. He knew only that he was dissatisfied with life in a Manchester warehouse. He felt that he had within him talents, energies, abilities, which, if he could only find the proper channel in which to exercise them, would enable him to take a high position amongst men. In commercial life, talents and mental powers were not required. Common sense, sound judgment, a sort of hail-fellow-well-met manner were the only requirements of a man of business. With his grave, serious, melancholy face, Ernest felt sure that he should never be able to make friends with jolly, drinking, hard-living customers. Neither did he wish it. His refined feelings caused him to shrink within himself, musing sadly, whenever he heard the loud, coarse horse-laugh of a commercial man, or gazed upon the countenance, swollen and disfigured with drinking.

Of what use is it, reasoned he, to make a beast of one's-self for the sake of doing a trade? Cannot a man—a traveller—sell goods without, what he terms, taking a glass with his customer? Trade must be in a strange state, indeed, if it be necessary to drink beer or brandy, and treat buyers to the same, in order to induce them to buy a parcel. And I am to spend my days amidst this sort of thing. I am to pass the whole of my life amongst drinking salesmen and drinking buyers. For, I suppose, that after having been in the counting-house two or three years, I shall be placed in the rooms amongst the goods, and that, after acquiring a knowledge of the articles in which we deal, I shall have to sell like the rest of the young men. Sell! play the agreeable to men whom I cannot but despise; for they are simply animals, men without minds, coarse, vulgar, soulless beings. Play the agreeable to such men for the sake of doing a trade, for the sake of squeezing orders out of them. What a paltry, aimless, un-intellectual life! Can an immortal being, a

man, a creature endowed with reason, an ambitious, aspiring, beauty-loving, ideal-creating, high-aiming man, lower himself so much as to bargain, and chaffer, and truckle to, and make friends with, men so immeasurably below him—men without culture, without mind, without intellect, ignorant, coarse, vulgar, low-bred, priding themselves upon their knowledge of business; yet knowing nothing, and not wishing to know anything, about art, science, literature, everything that tends to elevate the mind, and to raise men above the level of the eating, drinking, sleeping, swinish multitude?

And I, with my longings for something higher, with my cravings for some pursuit in which the powers of my mind might be brought into play, am doomed to waste my youth in drudging in a Manchester warehouse; and not my youth only, but my whole life; for, when my apprenticeship expires, I shall be too old to commence learning anything anew; besides, the salary to which I shall then be entitled will be an object. Oh! when I look forward, forward,

how hopeless does everything seem. A life of ill-paid toil is all that I can see before me. The visions that I indulged in twelve months ago have all been dispelled. Then, everything looked bright and promising ; now, everything looks dark and dreary indeed.

Poor mamma ! she little thinks that things are as they are. She imagines that I am gaining the confidence of my employers, that I am rapidly acquiring information ; whilst what am I in reality doing ?—what am I in very truth learning ? Nothing, nothing, nothing ! I have been a year with Brownlow and Stanton, and am scarcely wiser than I was on the first day. I keep a day-book and enter letters in the letter-book ; I occasionally make invoices, should Leslie happen to be out of the way ; I dust the desks, go to the post, and make quill-pens. This I think is the sum total. Truly I am clever ; I have acquired a knowledge of business ; I have learnt, and am learning rapidly.

Oh ! when I think of the future, when I look forward to that period which now seems

so unpromising, I feel as if I should like to die, as if I should like to go to bed some night, and, falling asleep, sleep on, never more to awake on earth.

Everything wearies me ; everything disgusts and annoys me. It seems as if there were no such things as peace, and quiet, and calm repose. Oh ! how I long for rest, rest, rest ; and, burying his face in his hands, the poor, sorrow-stricken boy flung himself upon his knees by the bed-side and prayed for that peace which passeth all understanding. His prayer was heard ; for, when he arose, his face was pale, but as serenely calm as the unruffled surface of a hill-encircled lake, over which the winds had swept in fierce gusts, and, dying away, left of a mirror-like smoothness.

As a child, Ernest Milman had always been remarkably quiet and grave. He would sit on a buffet at his mother's feet for hours, never speaking, unless spoken to, dreaming, thinking, castle-building. If asked what he was thinking about, he

would reply : " Oh ! many things, mamma ; I could not tell you, if I were to talk for a week." This was the only answer that could ever be got out of him. He never told any one his thoughts ; but kept them hidden in his own breast. And so he grew up. As a boy, he was reserved, studious, and grave beyond his years. He never made friends to whom he told all his secrets, as most schoolboys are in the habit of doing. There were some boys, of course, of congenial tastes with whom he associated more than others ; but to none did he ever freely and fully unburden himself. In school-hours he was always attentive. His lessons were always well-studied ; his exercises well-written ; and his conduct was at all times irreproachable. He seldom joined in the games that were played by his school-fellows ; but, when he did so, threw his whole soul into the game, whatever it might be. Beneath his quiet, grave demeanour, there lurked indomitable energy, a decisive will, and a most determined spirit.

Sensitive to a degree, he had felt most

keenly the trifling annoyances and cutting insults to which he had been subjected since the death of his father ; for he had become poor, and all little-minded people delight in trampling upon the fallen, and glory in infusing additional gall into the sufficiently-bitter cup of poverty.

The cuts direct, however, that were frequently given him by persons with whom, in his more prosperous days, he had been on terms of intimacy, only strengthened a resolution that he had made, to rise in the world, and attain to a position far above those held by such pitiful summer friends.

His extreme disappointment, then, may be conceived, on discovering that, by entering a Manchester warehouse, he had taken a false step. Upon reflection, however, he found comfort in the thought that he had acted for the best, that he could not have done anything different to that which he had done, and that by incessant and unwearied attention to business he might possibly, although not very probably, attain to that position for which he so ardently

yearned. Should all his efforts fail, should all his striving be in vain, why there was nothing for it, but to live on, ever-toiling, ever-working, until death, death, death!


How paltry, by the by, is the mode of proceeding that most people adopt when their friends become poor. They appear to imagine that, because a man has lost money, he has also lost all claim upon them for that friendly feeling which they were always so ready to display when it was not needed.

The man whose dinners they ate, whose wine they drank, whose invitations to dinner and dancing parties they accepted, may, should he meet with adversities, starve, and rot, and die; and those who were the first to express their friendly feeling towards him when rich, would not move one finger to help and save him in his hour of distress.

This is friendship forsooth—the friendship of the world. Why, a dog would know how to behave better; for dogs always remember those who have been kind to them.

Friendship! does such a thing exist amongst fashionable people? Really one

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would think not. Men and women deliberately, coolly, and with premeditation, cut a man who has had the misfortune to loose money—pass him by as though he were a perfect stranger. Pray is he any the worse personally for having met with adversity, may I ask such people? Is he less manly? less noble-minded? less capable of appreciating whatever is great and good? less worthy of your esteem? No, you answer. Then why cut him? Because he is unable to maintain his position in society.

Position in society, eh! A position is scarcely worth keeping in society, I imagine, that ousts a man because he happens to lose his money. Society, as I understand it, ought to be an association, as it were, of men and women, bound together by the ties of relationship or friendship, based on esteem, who, instead of coolly ignoring the existence of a once-rich friend, but now poor stranger, would hold out the right hand of true fellowship, and say, "if we can assist you in any way, name it, and we will do our very best to help you."

In the world, unfortunately however, friendship does not exist, except in isolated cases. The majority of men at once turn their backs upon the unfortunate being who has met with reverses.

Men! did I say! Men! Such creatures are not fit to be called men. Sneaks, pitiful wretches, humbugs, turncoats rather. No real, true man, with a manly heart beating in his breast, would desert a friend in the hour of need. A be-ringed, be-frilled fool, with shirt collars up to his ears, and gloves of unsullied primrose, might pass by a man with whom he had been acquainted, glass in eye, and with a white handkerchief stuck conspicuously in the breast-pocket of his coat, without deigning in his tremendous largeness to recognise "the demed fellow;" but no gentleman, no true gentleman, would be guilty of such a shabby action.

You who are rich, then, continue to cut those who are poor. Don't look at them; avert your faces; look hard at anything else; and rest assured that, though

you may be thought fashionable and high-bred by fools, you will ever be regarded as contemptible and little-minded people by those whose opinion is good for anything.

CHAPTER VII.

IN Brownlow and Stanton's office there was a youth of about Milman's age, Charles Leslie by name, with whom Ernest had struck up a sort of friendship. Leslie was the son of a solicitor at Kendal, who—imagining, as many persons living in the country and in country towns do foolishly imagine, that a youth need only come to Manchester, and, if he were ordinarily steady, he would be sure to make a fortune—sent Charles as soon as he left school straight to the city of Manchester. He succeeded in procuring a situation in Brownlow and Stanton's warehouse, and had been in their service about

a year when Ernest Milman came to assist in the counting-house.

The boys, though totally different in appearance and disposition, soon became friendly. Leslie was a good-looking lad, with a frank, open countenance, and tall, slender figure. Ernest, on the other hand, had a grave, serious look, which sat well on his pale, well-formed face, over which there seldom passed a smile. His figure, unlike Leslie's, was firmly set, broad across the shoulders, and evincing great physical strength. Leslie was an amiable, open-hearted, but weak-minded youth; whilst Milman, though fully as amiable as Leslie, was reserved, almost stern, and endowed with great strength of mind. Leslie very soon gave in to Milman as to his superior. Ernest, though he did not speak much, when he did say anything, went straight to the point, and always expressed himself clearly, sensibly, and well. Leslie could trust to and lean upon Milman; whilst Milman could in his turn make his friend acquainted with certain thoughts that he had, until he

knew Leslie, always kept concealed in his own breast. Ernest had never been so intimate with any one before. He knew not how it was, but Leslie attracted him in some manner or other. It could not be a similarity of tastes that drew them together ; for they frequently differed in opinion as widely as it was possible for two parties to do. What, then, could it be ? It was that they were both gentlemen, and naturally sought each other's society ; because the men and youths by whom they were surrounded were uneducated, vulgar, coarse, and low-bred.

"Leslie," said Ernest, one evening, as they walked down Oxford-road together, are you satisfied with Manchester ?"

"How do you mean, Milman ?" asked Leslie. "With the town ?"

"No ; with your life in a warehouse."

"Why, I don't know ; I can scarcely tell ; I don't go into things as deep as you do. I like it now as far as the work that I have to do at present is concerned. To sit on a stool all day and make out invoices is tolerably easy work, you know, Milman."

"True," said Ernest ; " but you don't mean to make out invoices all your life, I suppose ; do you ?"

" No ; I hope not. But what's the use of making one's self uneasy about the future ? I don't see the good of it."

" But you wish to get on ?" said Ernest.

" Undoubtedly."

" And you expect to get on ?"

" My old Dad expects that I shall."

" And do not you yourself ?"

" Why, yes ; I suppose I do."

" On what, then, do you found your expectations ?"

" On Mr. Brownlow's promises, and my own good conduct."

" Are Mr. Brownlow's promises always kept, think you ?"

" Now do you know, Milman," said Leslie, laughing, " I really think that you are a good barrister spoiled. However, let us drop the shop, for God's sake, and enjoy ourselves a little when we've a chance. What do you say to a game at cricket up at Rusholme ? They have started a new

club there, which I have joined. Will you come?"

"Yes, thank you," answered Ernest; "I will come with pleasure."

"That's right. Here comes the omnibus; let us jump on, and we shall be on the ground in less than a quarter of an hour."

So they clambered on to the top of the omnibus (a very dangerous proceeding, by the bye, for the driver never thought of stopping), and in rather more than ten minutes reached their destination.

The smoothly-mown cricket-field looked in splendid order for playing upon. There were already six or seven young men on the ground; amongst them, Janson, the crack bowler, as Leslie informed Milman. As the two friends neared the wickets, Leslie was saluted with:

"By Jove! Leslie, my boy, you're only just come in time. We were going to pick a side. Will you play?"

"Most certainly I will."

"And your friend also?"

"Yes. Allow me to introduce him.

Mr. Milman, Mr. Wilson." Both young men bowed.

"Are you a cricketer, sir?" asked Wilson, addressing Ernest.

"Why, I can scarcely call myself one," replied Ernest. "At school I played pretty frequently; but for the last twelve months I have scarcely handled a bat."

"Oh, a little practice is all that you require. One soon loses one's cricket, without constant practice. But I must go and pick sides with Cooke, or the beauty of the evening will be gone."

So saying, he ran off.

Presently he returned, shouting, "Now, gentlemen, let us begin; quick, all sides out. You are on the outside, Mr. Milman, addressing Ernest. Cook picked you. He says that he has seen you play, and that you are a regular devil to stick in. Janson, you are on my side; get a bat, and look quick, that's a good fellow. I say, Cooke, will you place the field? There is no time to be lost, if we are all to have an innings."

"Morton," shouted Cooke, "take long-

field-on, please. Dent, play point, there's a good fellow. Mr. Milman, would you be so good as to field to square-leg? Somers, just long-stop, will you?—and don't let them get any byes. Heap, take slip; and you, Warner, play long-field-off. There, we are all right now. Are you ready, Wilson?"

"No. I want guard," replied Wilson.

"Oh, bother guard! Hold your bat straight. Middle and leg? What do you like?"

"Middle."

"Middle, eh! A little more to the off, then. A shade more. There, now you've got middle; and much good may it do you."

After a great deal of preparation—patting the ground, making a block-hole, and so forth—Wilson said,

"I'm ready now, Cooke; bowl away; and see if I don't knock your bowling to blazes."

"Pooh! man; don't brag. You're ready, are you? Now for it, then. Play."

The first ball was a little wide. Wilson made a grand flourish with his bat, and

attempted to cut, but failed. The second ball was admirably pitched; but, because the ground was a little hard, it rose too high, and shot over the top of the wickets.

"By Jove, Wilson," exclaimed Cooke, "that was a shayer. It nearly took you, my boy."

"Oh! ah! it was a very fair ball, very fair indeed; but just give me guard again, will you? Middle and leg this time."

"In, in, in; a little more; there, that's it."

"Fair ball, was it?" muttered Cooke to himself. "I'll see if I can't bowl you, you conceited monkey."

Taking a good look at the wickets, beside which Wilson was attitudinizing, he delivered the ball with all the force of his arm. It struck the ground about a couple of yards from the wickets, rose beautifully, and took the bails in grand style.

"There, Wilson, your goose is cooked at any rate," said one.

"That was a licking ball," observed a second.

"Ha, ha, ha, Wilson!" laughed a third.
"You've knocked Cooke's bowling to blazes, haven't you? ha, ha, ha!"

Wilson threw down his bat in a pet, and muttering to himself, "wrong block—cheat—damn," took Leslie's place at cover-point.

(Did my reader ever meet with a swellish cricketer, who was ever got out in any but an accidental manner? I never did.)

"Now then, Leslie, mind your eye," sung out one of the fielders.

"All right," replied Leslie, as he took his place at the wickets.

For five minutes or so, he managed to keep in, during which time he got four notches; two singles, and a neat cut for two. At last, in endeavouring to make a swipe to leg, he was caught out by Milman.

In half an hour, the whole of Wilson's side had been disposed of. The total score was thirty-two.

"Will you come in with me, Mr. Milman," said Cooke, "and we will see if we cannot run up a score between us? Have you any objection to take the first over?"

"No, none whatever."

As soon as the field was in order again, Ernest, having obtained guard, made ready for the first ball. He looked up and saw that Janson was going to bowl. He felt then what is commonly called "funky."

"Are you ready, sir?" asked Janson, politely.

"Quite so," replied Ernest.

"Then—play."

The first ball shot like lightning past Milman's legs; the second he imagined would take him. He determined to try his best, however, to keep it away from his wickets; and holding his bat loosely in his hands, and fixing his eyes upon the ball, he, as it came like a shot towards him, quietly turned it off between long-stop and long-leg.

"Nicely played, indeed, sir," said Janson, who, thoroughly understanding cricket, was competent to give an opinion.

"Played" — "Played" — "Played, indeed!" cried the heavy men.

"Bravo, Milman," shouted Leslie.

"You are no novice at cricket, by Jove," observed Cooke.

Taking courage from the success of his first attempt at playing really crack bowling, Ernest, carefully watching each ball that Janson delivered, managed to keep his wickets up for a long time. He did not certainly make any brilliant hits, but he proved himself to be a safe, cautious, and steady player.

Janson gave up in despair. "It was no use," he said, "bowling against a stone wall."

"Try lobs," suggested some one.

"Here, Somers, just try if chuckey-bowling will be of any use."

Chuckey-bowling—alias lobs—had no more effect, however, than Janson's steamy round-hand. In fact, it was an improvement in the wrong direction. Ernest was not to be deceived by slow bowling. He played just as cautiously as ever. Instead of running out of his ground, and slashing away at the lobs, he waited until he had a good chance, until an easy ball came, and

then slapped into it with all his might. Lobs were no improvement—that was very evident.

After trying grounders, in addition to chuckey-bowling and round-hand, Milman's opponents gave up in despair. "There was no getting Mr. Milman out in any way," they said. In course of time, however, they managed to dispose of all his comrades, and Ernest was therefore obliged to give up. He carried out his bat with a score of thirty-five. The total score was sixty-seven.

As Ernest left the cricket-field, in company with his friend, Leslie said, "Why, Milman, what a player you are! I had no idea that you were such a first-rate bat."

"I had a good deal of practice when at school, Charles; but I can scarcely be called a good player. You should see young Madison, of Broughton. He is said to be one of the finest batters in England. Manchester is rather famed for turning out good cricketers, you know."

"Yes; so I suppose."

"You have not been in the habit of

playing much, I fancy, before you came here," continued Ernest.

"No; there is very little cricket-playing at Kendal."

"Ah, well, you may have as much of it as you like here, in Manchester."

As Ernest walked home alone, after parting with Leslie, he could not help thinking about cricket and cricketers. "How many young men," thought he, "devote themselves so completely to cricket, as to neglect the graver duties of life. They appear to imagine that to be good players is all that they are sent here for. Study and business are neglected; for when once a young man becomes by constant practice a first-rate player, he cannot tear himself away from the fascinating game. And what a loss of time, too! Hours upon hours, that ought to be employed in acquiring information, are passed in hitting a ball about with a piece of wood. Foreigners may well laugh at us.

"Here have I been wasting all this precious evening in cricket-playing, instead of reading instructive books. What a fool I

have been! Why, as soon as I left the ground, one of those conceited asses, of whom there were three or four present, might ask, 'Who is that Milman?' 'Where does he come from?' To which another might reply, 'Oh, don't you know the fellow? He lives at so and so. His father was a merchant, and failed. His mother keeps lodgers now, I fancy. Badly off, poor devil!'

"Good God! and I have subjected myself to that sort of thing—put myself in the power, as it were, of a set of empty-headed fools—given them an opportunity of holding me up to ridicule and scorn.

"This is one of the greatest evils of cricket-playing. One meets with fellows, rich, ignorant, mulish—who, because they are well off, look down with contempt upon those who are not so wealthy as themselves. They appear to think that they are conferring a favour when they offer you a couple of fingers to shake, and say, 'How do—devilish fine weather, ain't it? 'Day.' Bah! What fools men are. Never again will I

place it in the power of such idiots to say
'that I am poor—that my father failed—
and that my mother keeps lodgers.'

"I here firmly resolve, never, under any
circumstances whatever, to be tempted to
play another game at cricket."

CHAPTER VIII.

ERNEST had to pass, on his way home, a street in which great numbers of operatives existed. Numbers of men and women were crowded together at the end of this street, as he went by. As he looked at their shrunk bodies, withered and sunken cheeks, and hunger-thinned faces, he could not help musing sadly upon their condition.

Truly, the condition of the labouring classes is a subject prolific of thought.

The greater number of workmen and workwomen, in Manchester and other manufacturing towns, marry young for this reason: They know not, in the unmarried state, what comfort is; and therefore fancy

that, by getting married, they must necessarily better their condition. For a working-man, in nine cases out of ten, when unmarried, will argue that it takes no more to keep a man and his wife than it does to keep a bachelor.

Thinking in this way then, they, at perhaps twenty years of age, are married. For a short time, things go on tolerably well. Both the husband and the wife are in full work, and their united wages are sufficient to keep them in tolerable comfort. In twelve months' time, or less perhaps, the wife becomes a mother, and of course then they have to subsist upon the wages earned by the husband. He, discovering, at last, that he had taken an imprudent step by getting married, endeavours to mend the matter by frequenting the alehouse and the ginshop. The money squandered there might possibly have helped to keep from actual want his wife and child, but was totally inadequate to maintain them in any kind of comfort. His dream of happiness and domestic joy is over. There is nothing for it but—drink.

Do you blame him, reader? What would you have done in such a case?

“Pray to God for help,” do you say?

It is rather a difficult matter to pray to God with an empty stomach, allow me to tell you. The tracts that you rich, religious people distribute amongst the poor will not fill the insides of hungry children, or save from death their starving parents. Tracts—bah! Give them something to thank God for. Give them food and clothes; and then, perhaps, when the pangs of hunger are subdued, and their numbed, emaciated limbs are incased in good warm clothing, they may be able to find out for themselves, without your trashy tracts, that there is a great God who ruleth all things.

Tracts for breadless, rag-clad children! Tracts for hollow-eyed women, brought down to skin and bone for want of nourishing food! Tracts for gaunt, spare, skeleton-like men! Tracts! Good God! What fools men and women must be to imagine that starving, foodless, dying creatures can read and ponder upon the contents of their tracts!

First attend to temporal wants ; for, until you have done so, you have precious little chance of getting your tracts on spiritual matters read, I can tell you.

This is one of the greatest evils of the present day. Folks, forsooth, must go and visit, as they call it—visit the poor, and talk to them about their souls, and so forth, without considering that possibly there is not a morsel of bread in the place. As long as their pockets are not touched, they will snivel, and cant, and pray with, and preach to, poor starving wretches ; and go away, thanking God for the blessed opportunity that has been afforded them of leading the erring spirit in the right way. But ask them for temporal aid ; ask them to deny themselves any little luxury to which they may have been accustomed ; ask them to give bread where they gave what they called spiritual counsel, and they will refuse : they will talk about the claims upon them ; they will hold forth about the sums that they have given towards the conversion of the dear blacks in some out of the way spot or

other ; they will prate, and chatter, and gabble on for hours, endeavouring to prove that they have left themselves nothing at all, they have been so charitable ; and wind up their discourse by saying, “that they regret to find that their efforts for directing the minds of so and so—who were dying of want—towards their Father in heaven, had not been so successful as they had prayerfully hoped.”

And such people are Christians. Such people are religious people. Such people are regular attendants at church or chapel. Such people fancy that they are leading a holy, consistent, and religious life. Such people imagine that they are doing God service by cramming the Bible down the throats of men and women, brought to hunger, and want, and death, by the grinding systems of a money-making nation.

Great God in heaven, shall these things be? Shall the sorrow-stricken, spirit-crushed, orld-sickened, body-diseased artisan be insulted, and hurt, and talked to by these paltry, senseless, hypocritical humbugs, who

pretend to do good, and, in reality, with their cost-nothing charity, do a great deal of harm? How can an uneducated person be convinced that God is all-merciful, all-just, and all-good, when he sees that riches, and temporal comforts of every kind, are showered down upon the heads of idle, do-nothing, lazy, gad-about people; whilst he, the industrious, striving, ever-toiling, hard-working artisan has to drag on a miserable existence, in spite of all his struggles to drive semi-starvation and want-engendered disease from the door of his filthy, stinking, sickness-breeding, death-inviting sty?e?

If men and women would but think for one moment, before they talk to a starving man about his soul—without taking into consideration the state of his body—they might avoid making such complete, canting, blind, idiotic fools of themselves as they so often do.

The children—the offspring of these early marriages—as soon as they are able to walk, of course run about, dirty, rag-clad, untended little wretches, in the streets, and

by-ways, and alleys, and courts, in the neighbourhood of which their falsely-called homes are situated. As soon as they are able to earn a penny, they are made to work—work hard—whilst children of their own ages, in the middle and higher classes of society, are perhaps just commencing school-life; work the same hours—long, weary, health-injuring hours—as grown up men and women.

Is it a wonder, then, that, utterly ignorant as they are—brought up as they have been in the midst of vice, and filth, and wickedness of every kind—accustomed as they have been, from earliest childhood, to blows, and want, and blasphemy—living as they have ever done in the midst of vermin-breeding filth, and fever-causing stench—pigging together as they have ever done, without regard to age, or sex, or decency—running about as they did in their earlier years, uncared for, unwatched, neglected, wallowing like swine amongst dirt, and refuse, and nastiness of every kind—accustomed as they have been, from earliest infancy, to everything that can brutalize, de

grade, and animalize human beings—is it to be wondered at, I say, if they drink, and swear, and curse, and live lives of wickedness, depravity, and sin? Is it to be wondered at, if men—perhaps capable of doing great deeds, and thinking great thoughts—drink, drink, drink, until they become very fiends, through frequenting those hells on earth, gin-palaces and ale-houses?


Hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands of human beings are annually ruined, body and soul, because they are driven—yes, driven—to those gilded hells by darkest, blackest despair. Despair? Yes, that despair which will make a man stand on a river-spanning bridge, gazing, gazing, gazing at the black, turbid, seething waters that rush, and gurgle, and roar beneath him; inviting him, as it were, to cast off his heavy burden of care, and grief, and woe; and, plunging headlong into the rushing stream, forget for ever, beneath its friendly waters, those earthly troubles that have made him more like a devil than a man.

Is it to be wondered at, if women, who

ought to be embodiments of every virtue—if women, pallid, hollow-eyed, sunken-cheeked, emaciated, unsexed, cursing, swearing, blaspheming, dishonoured women, drink too? Drink, and drink, and drink, until, with one long, last, awful, soul-sickening blasphemy, they fall down and yield up their immortal spirits to the great God who gave them.


Is it to be wondered at, if men and women, both maddened with drink—crazed with the liquid fire that they have imbibed—with devils-raging, serpents-stinging, gin-fires blazing within their hell-enclosing breasts, commit deeds, from the very mention of which the soul shrinks back shuddering?

Is all this to be wondered at? No. These horrors are the inevitable fruits of such bringings-up—such neglected infancies—such unwatched-over early years. Fathers toil, and half-starve, and drink. Mothers toil, and half-starve, and drink too. And children grow up anyhow, if they can; or die when young, which is a vast deal better.



The wages that a factory hand obtains are not sufficient for himself. They cannot therefore be sufficient to maintain a wife and family. Is it to be wondered at, then, if he goes wrong? What is the prospect before him? Misery, and wretchedness, and want, when in work. When out of work, aged, infirm, decrepit—the workhouse or the grave.

And what are you doing all this time, O my rich reader? Does the contemplation of suffering cause you to hold out the hand of true sympathy to the sufferer? Do you do all that lies in your power to assist and relieve the wretched being who groans under his heavy burden of grief, and care, and woe? Do you render that temporal assistance—that material aid which is required; instead of preaching, and holding forth about a God, a heaven, and a hell? Do you try to raise up the crushed spirit—to bind together the almost broken heart—to soothe and pacify the fierce, railing at all things, God and man hating invalid, with words of kindly sympathy, and deeds of true Christian charity;



instead of twaddling, and psalm-singing, and prating about religion ?

Do you do all this ? Or are you one of those little-minded, contemptible, good-for-nothing, artisan-shunning beings, who imagine, or rather try to imagine, that there is nothing good to be found amongst working-men and working-women ; that they are a set of ungrateful, discontented, dissatisfied, never-know-what-they-want, beings ; who rail, and storm at, abuse, and revile the powers that be—the dignities of the world—the persons set up in authority over them ? Are you one of those who think that the lower classes should be kept down ?—that they should not receive education of any kind whatever ; for that education would give them ideas and notions unfitted for their station, and therefore cause anarchy, confusion, and endless disorder ? Are you one of those, who, revelling in the midst of the good things of this world, think that those not so highly favored as themselves should never know anything but poverty and toil, and never have anything but what

they think proper to permit the poor devils to scrape together? Are you one of those who, sitting in their roomy, cushioned pews, reading out of Bibles bound in purple velvet, edged with gold, and kneeling upon soft and comfortable hassocks, wonder how it is that poor people cannot come to church to hear the Gospel preached, and to receive (after themselves of course) the blessed sacrament of the body and blood of Christ? Are you one of those who give away soup-tickets, and wonder how it is that the poor hungry wretches to whom they give them do not fall down on their knees, look heavenwards, and call upon God to bless them, to let the light of his countenance shine upon them, to grant their every wish, to guard them, to watch over and protect them, because of their great kindness, their perfectly astounding Christian charity, in giving away a paltry soup-ticket or two that cost them nothing, or next to nothing? Do you shun the poor man as if he were a leper? Do you dare to assert that he is not as good as yourself? Do you mean to say that he is not just as

much entitled to the comforts and the luxuries of this world (if he could but get them) as you yourself are? Do you dare to treat human beings, because they are poor, gross, uneducated, often vile, as if they were dirt beneath your feet, as if they were not of a similar nature to yourself, as if they were not, along with your own proud, stuck-up, supercilious self, the sin-stained beings for whom Christ died? Do you eat and drink, laugh, gad-about, dance, and sing, without giving one thought, one sigh to the poor, the destitute, the starving, and the homeless, whose bodies are wasting away through want, and whose souls are wrung with fierce agony?

If you do all this, if you think in this manner, you are truly to be pitied. You are unworthy of the esteem and respect of sensible and Christian people. You are a pitiful, narrow-minded, contemptible, selfish person. You are destitute of every fine feeling that adorns and beautifies the character of men and women. You are utterly incapable of kindling a single love-spark in


the breasts of those who, poor and ignorant though they may be, know how to appreciate a properly-bestowed kindness, and who, according to the deeds and conduct of those above them, love or hate them with all the intensity of their single-minded natures. You are an illiberal, ignorant, bigoted, prejudiced humbug, knowing nothing yourself, and therefore fancying that you are a Solon, pluming yourself upon the home-made idea that all people lower than yourself in social position are devoid of those excellencies and notable qualities that exalt and elevate your own God-like character to the high eminence from which you look down with scorn and contempt upon the immense masses, the striving, toiling, struggling millions, that grub, and seethe, and vegetate, and die beneath you.

In your velvet-bound, gilt-edged, cross-adorned Bible, you may find these words: "He that exalteth himself shall be abased." Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them.

If, on the other hand, you are not a



humbug and a canting hypocrite, but a true Christian ; if you hold out the hand of true sympathy to wretched, miserable, food-craving beings ; if you do all that you possibly can to lighten the grievous burden too often borne by the labouring classes ; if you earnestly endeavour to better the condition of white slaves at home, instead of bothering your head about black slaves abroad ; if you deny yourself little luxuries to which you may from childhood have been accustomed, so that you may have something more with which to procure the simple necessities of life for those who otherwise, perhaps, might die of want, or at any rate live as though they lived not ; if, instead of avoiding, shunning, thinking ill of, shutting your eyes to the miseries and woes of the working classes, you help, relieve, assist, and aid them, both with your purse and your kindly sympathy, rest assured that on earth you will possess the respectful affection of those whose existence you have made more bearable, and in heaven you will reap the reward of your truly Christian, self-denying labours.



CHAPTER IX.

"You are late, Ernest dear," said Mrs. Milman, as her son entered the room in which she was sitting. "Have you been detained at the warehouse?"

"No, mamma," replied Ernest. "Charles Leslie asked me to go up to Rusholme to have a game at cricket with him; and as I had not played for such a long time, I thought that I should like to have a game, so I went with him. You have not been uneasy about me I hope—have you, mamma?"

"No dear; I wondered why you did not come home; but as I concluded that you were detained by business, I did not feel at

all uneasy about you. You have had tea, I suppose, Ernest?"

"No, mamma, I have not; I am famished to death. Let me have something to eat as soon as possible, please."

"Not had anything to eat!" exclaimed Mrs. Milman. "Oh! Ernest, you should have got something. You will be ill if you remain such a length of time without food. Sarah, Sarah," calling the servant, "bring in the tea-things, quick. Mr. Ernest has had nothing to eat since dinner."

"Ha'nt he though?" said red-armed, open-mouthed Sarah. "Why hoo'll be badly, if hoo does 'na tak better care o' hissel? I'll look slippy in bringing up th' tay, see if I dunna."

So Sarah bustled about, and in a short time th' tay made its appearance.

"Now, Ernest, love, just drink this cup of tea," said Mrs. Milman, handing him one. "It will refresh you. Sarah will broil some ham, which will be ready directly. Should you like some poached eggs to it, dear?"

"Oh! no, mamma, thank you, it will do

capitally by itself. Nothing is better than broiled ham when a fellow's hungry. It is rather extravagant though, mamma, in our circumstances, to have ham to tea; is not it?"

"It is only once in a way, however, Ernest dear," replied Mrs. Milman; "and I am sure that you need it to-night, for you look quite fagged out."

Ernest drank his tea, ate his ham, cleared the decks of toast and bread and butter; and, pushing away his chair from the table, said—

"Well, mamma, is there any news to-day?"

"You remember Mrs. —: but Sarah had better take the things away before we begin to talk. Ring the bell, dear."

Ernest rang the bell. Sarah came in, and, after upsetting the cream-jug and sugar-basin, marched off with the tea-tray.

"Well, mamma, I remember Mrs. who—"

"Mrs. Burton, love; the lady who—"

"Oh, that stout woman, who dresses in such shocking bad taste," interrupted Ernest; "yes, I remember her. It would be rather

difficult to forget her, after once seeing her, I fancy. What about Mrs. Burton, mamma?"

"When I was in Mereton's shop this afternoon, she came in. Mrs. Mereton was engaged at the time; but that did not appear to signify to Mrs. Burton, who began to toss about the things on the counter, and to upset every thing that she could lay her hands upon. Mrs. Mereton looked on, but dare not make any remark, for Mrs. Burton is one of her best customers, and it would not do to offend her. After serving the lady, to whom she had been attending when Mrs. Burton entered the shop, Mrs. Mereton came opposite to where Mrs. Burton stood, and asked her if she wished to see a bonnet, which, as far as I could understand, was in process of trimming for her."

"No—bonnet—no," angrily exclaimed Mrs. Burton. "I called about the crimson satin dress that you are making up for me. Why was it not sent home on Monday, I want to know?"

"We could not possibly get it finished in time, Mrs. Burton," meekly replied Mrs.

Mereton. There was only Saturday you know to—”

“Only Saturday,” exclaimed Mrs. Burton; “just hear the woman. Why there was all Sunday. What on earth were you and your workwomen doing on Sunday, pray?”

“I never work myself, nor allow my assistants to work on Sunday, Mrs. Burton,” quietly, yet firmly, replied Mrs. Mereton. “I regret that your dress could not be sent home in time, but there was no help for it. We worked until twelve o’clock on Saturday night, and commenced again at six on Monday morning. I am very sorry that you have been disappointed, but we could not do more than we did.”


“Fudge, bother! You might have sent my dress home on Monday if you had tried. You didn’t try. You ought to have worked on Sunday; you ought to make your women work on Sunday too. What are they fit for, I should like to know, but work? They’ve no right to rest on Sunday; they should work. The poor should do nothing but work.

What must they go to church for, I should like to know, getting their heads crammed full of religious stuff? I'll tell you what it is, Mrs. Mereton; I've put up with your Methody airs too long by half. I'll have no more of them. If I want a dress making, I'll have it made, Sunday or no Sunday; and if you don't like it, you may leave it, that's all. I'll get somebody else to make my things. Somebody who'll make them better and charge less. Not that I care for money; I've lots of money, more than I know how to spend. I don't care a rap for the money; but I won't be put upon; I won't be put out of the way by a lot of chapel-going dress-makers. If I want a dress, I'll have a dress; and if you won't make it, somebody else shall. I'll not be humbugged any longer; make me out a bill of what I owe you, and I'll pay you at once. I'm able to pay cash down on the spot for any thing that I order. I'm not like some of the poverty-stricken grand ladies you've been used to deal with up in London. Manchester ladies has money, let me tell you, and Manchester ladies knows

how to spend money too. Why I could buy twenty times as many dresses, and bonnets, and capes, as my Lady this, that, or t'other; aye, and pay money down for 'em too. I don't want six months' credit, like some grand folks—no, not I. I has money, and I spends money, and has things nice; none of your prints, and alpacas, and rubbitch for me. No—give me silk, and satin, and velvet; something that shows you've got money, and ar'nt afraid to spend it; something that says—Look here, it's the very best that's to be got for love or money, and it's paid for too, it is'nt got on tick. Money makes the lady. It ar'nt manners, as grand folks says as has'nt got money, but has got manners. Servants has got manners; any common body can get manners, but money ar'nt so easy to get. Grand folks, Lords, and Dukes, and Earls, and such like, is always trying to run down Manchester people, and doing all they can to trample them under their 'risocratic feet. Why a Manchester man can buy up fifty Lords, and a Manchester lady can afford to spend a hunderd times as much

on dress as a woman what has got a title tacked on to her name. As if Mrs. Burton isn't as good a name as My Lady this, that, or t'other. Money's the thing, money rules the roast, and make a rich Mrs. better than a poor Countess. What's a Countess? If she has'nt got more money than I have, she's no better than me. She can't dress as fine, live in as big a house, or have as good dinners as I can. Therefore, I'm the better lady of the two. As to birth and education, why I was born in wedlock, and my lady was the same, I suppose; and I was sent to a school where father paid three hundred pound a-year for me, including board and lodging only. Washing were extra, so also was masters. Washing and masters come to another hundred pound; and then there was odd expenses which added up. The total was such as would make a lord open his eyes, I reckon, when he looked over the account for his daughter's twelve months' schooling. Lords ar'nt fit to hold the candle to Manchester men, as far as money goes; and ladies, duchesses, isn't fit

to lace the boots of Manchester men's wives, for they are such stuck-up, proud things; and they've nothing to be proud on, for they hav'nt got no money—at least not so much as wives of mill-owners; and what else in this mortal world is there to be proud of, I should like to know? I'm proud of myself and my husband because we're rich. I was a weaver, and he was a cut-looker; and we've got on from one thing to another until we've made ourselves what we is. I arn't ashamed to say that we have risen from poor folks. Some folks might like bygones to be bygones; but I don't. If anyone say anything against us, let him come forrard, and lay guinea against guinea with my husband, and I'll go bail we'll swamp him. And now don't stand there gaping, Mrs. Mereton, but give me my bill, and I'll pay you in new suvverins, fresh from th' bank. Look quick, now. My horses will catch their deaths of cold, if you don't make haste. They cost three hundred and fifty pound the pair. Only a Manchester man could afford such a sum for a pair of



carriage-horses for his wife's brougham. The brougham cost one hundred and seventy; the best that could be got for money. Dear me, what a time you are, Mrs. Mere-ton; the salmon for dinner will be spoiled, I'm afraid. I gave three and ten a pound for it. They wanted four; but every Manchester woman should follow her husband's example, and get the thing done as low as she can. Not that I care for the money—I've lots of money. No discount off, do you say, Mrs. Mereton? Oh, nonsense! What's the gross amount, fifteen four eleven? Two and-a-half off, prompt cash, will be—let me see — seven and seven-pence, seven and eleven—say even money. That will make it fourteen pound seventeen nett. Here are fifteen new suverins. Give me three shillings change; there—now receipt the bill—write over the stamp—that will do. Send my dress up as soon as you can, and I'll pay you when you send the bill in. Most ladies would make you wait a few months for your money; but the wives of Manchester merchants are always able and


ready to pay cash down for everything they buy. Good morning ; I hav'nt had my dinner yet, though it is so late. It's not fashionable to dine early ; I never do. We have dinner late, and have everything on the table that can be bought for money. Nothing is too expensive or too good for a Manchester man, for he makes lots of money. Good morning ; good morning."

And the grand Mrs. Burton sailed majestically out of the shop.

"Well, Ernest," said Mrs. Milman, "what is your opinion of Mrs. Burton?"

"I think, mamma, that she is a slightly exaggerated specimen of the majority of Manchester ladies, or rather women. They are, take them as a body, coarse, low-bred, vulgar, purse-proud, ignorant, worshippers of wealth, and despisers of educated, refined, and intellectual people ; who are as superior to them, as the heavens are high above the earth."


"So I think, Ernest ; and now let us go to bed ; it is nearly eleven o'clock."




CHAPTER X.

“HAVE you heard from your son—Henry, I think, is his name—lately, Mrs. Wilson,” asked a lady one morning, who—as is the custom with the fair sex—had called upon her friend (!) to show off her new bonnet, drink a glass of sherry, eat a slice of cake, and gossip about and slander all absent acquaintances, who in their turn would—in a lady-like way, of course—speak ill of and backbite those with whom, if they were to meet them in the street, they would shake hands, and smirk, and smile, and ask after papa, and Johnny, and Charley, and Emmy, and, with a lament about the wet state of the


flags, and a prophecy respecting the chances of rain or sunshine, smilingly shake hands again, and, with a graceful bend of a come-kiss-me-quick (if the wearer happened to be young ; or a poke, if from the cheeks of the lady the lovely peach-bloom had faded) bonneted head, and a to all appearance most friendly good-morning, save the street-cleaners a great deal of trouble, by sweeping the dirty flags with their long-trained dresses, as they moved majestically away, with their silks rustling, their feathers and ribbons fluttering in the gentle breeze, and their faces apparently beaming with every amiable feeling that makes ladies so loveable and attractive ; whilst, beneath those smiling masks, there beat hearts, perchance, indulging thoughts of envy and uncharitableness, because an acquaintance had procured, somehow—in an underhand manner, of course—a dress, a cape, or a pattern of something or another, that was quite the rage in the fashionable world, and that could only be obtained with considerable difficulty, and at great expense.



If lady number one turns out in an uncommon looking and therefore fashionable jacket (!)—perhaps a copy of one said to have been lately worn by the Duchess of Absurditydom—lady number two must have a similar garment, made out of better materials, if possible, so that she can cut lady number one out; or she, lady number two, will cry her eyes out, and go green with jealousy. No matter how ridiculous-looking the article of dress in question may be; no matter how ugly, how destitute of grace—if fashion decrees that the whatever-it-may-be is the affair that all ladies who pretend to dress well must wear, they will wear it, though it be the most ungraceful, inelegant, unbecoming, hideous make-up that ever hid female charms from view, or caused intelligent men to look almost with contempt upon women, who, for paltry fashion's sake, were ready to follow the lead in dress, without daring to think and act for themselves, and without venturing to procure such simple lady-like clothing as befits sensible and judi-



cious English gentlewomen. They were so afraid of being different to other people. Different to other people! Why everyone, who is anybody, must be different to the multitude ; or he or she can never stand out distinct from the mass. No lady who is worth a single straw will follow the fashion in dress. It would be an insult to the sex to suppose so. The majority, the crowd, the mass, undoubtedly run wild after style and fashion ; but still here and there may be seen one, who, by birth and education a lady, shows by her unassuming and truly feminine dress that she is in every sense of the word a gentlewoman. All honour to the woman who, instead of spending her days in talking about and trying on dresses, capes, mantles, and bonnets, who, instead of arranging, disarranging, and re-arranging ribbons, and flowers, and laces, and flumeries, passes her time, like an educated, sensible, and rational being, in acquiring information of various kinds, by reading and study, and in perfecting herself in those graceful accomplishments which, in addition



to their natural charms, render ladies so irresistibly attractive.

No woman who spends the whole of a life-time in studying dress and fashion can retain the lasting affection and esteem of a sensible man. She may, butterfly-like, be regarded in the summer sunlight with fleeting admiration; but, in the bleak winter-time of sorrow and old age, on what can she depend, or to whom can she look for that love and affection without which this world—to a woman especially—is indeed a dreary wilderness.

God did not create woman to dress, but to love. He implanted love-seeds in female breasts that would—if properly attended to—spring up and bear much fruit; but the yearnings for dress and fashion are the rank weeds intermixed through contact with an at first attractive, but at last unsatisfying world, which, growing side by side with the plants of affection, in time choke and destroy the tender flowers, unless great care be taken from the very first.

The moral, death-bearing winds that

sweep from fashion's furnace over the fields of affection will scorch, burn up, and utterly destroy the sweet love-flowers that are left unprotected to meet the withering, destruction-laden blasts. Watchful care and unceasing attention are necessary to preserve, in all their beauty, and grace, and purity, those blossoms of love and affection which bud and come to such ripe perfection in their native soil, the angel-guarded and God-watched-over hearts of females whose thoughts and lives are unstained and pure as the driven snow. Dress and fashion are not every thing. The silk and velvet-clad body is but the shell in which the soul-kernel is incased.

The woman who spends her life in studying dress, who allows the precious days to pass by—never, never to return—without endeavouring to get rid of the hard world-crust with which her naturally fine nature has, by intercourse with heartless, fashion-worshipping, purity and peace-despising people, become gradually coated, is unworthy of the name she bears, and incapa-

ble of inspiring in the breast of an estimable, noble-hearted man, that love, not passion-bred, but based on esteem, without which the existence of a woman is unnatural and solitary indeed.

Dressy male fools may giggle, and dance, and laugh, and flirt with dressy female fools; but sensible men and sensible women must look nearer home for comfort and peace than the ball-room, the theatre, and concert-hall, where all is discord and dissatisfaction. Occasionally a visit to a place of amusement may be paid without positive harm resulting from it; but to go, as some people go, night after night and week after week, is absurd as well as injurious.

On laying down her head on the snow-white pillow after an evening spent at a gay dancing party, the weary fair one—if capable of thinking at all—will, as she rests her tired limbs and vainly endeavours to close her aching eyes, subscribe with all her heart and soul to the saying: “Vanity of vanities; all is vanity!”

To return, however, to my tale.

“Have you heard from your son lately, Mrs. Wilson,” asked Mrs. Groome, who was one of the dons of Ambleside, and who had called upon Mrs. Wilson for the purpose of squeezing a sovereign out of her for some so-called charity or another, and of obtaining one glass towards the bottle of wine which she—like a good many other ladies—usually drank on her morning-call days.

“Yes, I had a letter from him this morning,” replied Mrs. Wilson. “He does not like Manchester, I fan——”

“Manchester!” exclaimed Mrs. Groome, looking horror-struck, “Manchester, did you say? I thought you had sent him to London.”

“No,” said Mrs. Wilson, sorrowfully; “his father was determined that he should be a merchant, and therefore made arrangements for him to go to Manchester. I tried very hard to induce Mr. Wilson to give him a professional education; but it was of no use, so to Manchester he went, and now——”

“But Manchester of all places,” broke out Mrs. Groome; “that nest of discontented factory hands; that metropolis of

vulgarity ; that smoke-begrimed town, where all the coarsest, lowest——”

“ Oh, Mrs. Groome,” interrupted Mrs. Wilson, “ you have really too bad an opinion of Manchester. It is smoky, I allow, and the operatives are sometimes—when work is scarce, and bread dear—very unruly ; but——”

“ And you have actually sent your son to dirty, cottony Manchester. Well, wonders will never cease. I should have thought that Mr. Wilson, who, I have been informed, was a Liverpool merchant, would have——”

“ You have been misinformed, Mrs. Groome,” interposed Mrs. Wilson. “ My husband was a Manchester, not a Liverpool merchant.”

“ You don’t say so. Was he really ? Well now—ah. That accounts for it. No ; no more cake, thank you. Was he indeed ? I must really say good-morning. You will give a sovereign, will you not, to the Negro-Conversion Society ? Mrs. Barnes, Mrs. Clifton, and Mrs. Hume, have each given a sovereign. I may put your name down, of course ?

“Certainly,” replied Mrs. Wilson; “I shall have much pleasure in contributing.”

(Reader, why is it that, in making donations, or in subscribing to public charities, the donors or subscribers always put down their names for similar sums? If Mrs. A gives ten pounds or subscribes one guinea, why does Mrs. B also give ten pounds, and subscribe one guinea? and why does Mrs. C, who felt, or said she felt, five pounds charitably disposed, on looking down the list of names and amounts, say: “Oh, I will increase my donation to ten pounds, as Mrs. A and Mrs. B appear each to have given that sum?” Tell me, reader, does true religion or vulgar parade influence donors and subscribers to charities, the full accounts of which are published in the newspapers?)

Mrs. Wilson at once paid her sovereign, with which Mrs. Groome marched off in triumph, after having desired that she might be remembered to Henry, who had once asked his mother, in Mrs. Groome’s presence, why Mrs. G. had such a red nose; and for whom, in consequence of his kind inquiry respect-

ing her nasal organ, Mrs. Groome entertained feelings of warm affection, she said ; but — we question the truth ; no, not truth ; it is impossible to doubt a lady's word—but the—the—in fact, we think that the assertion of the lady-collector for the Negro Conversion Society was slightly — only slightly, mind—incorrect. Ladies never tell lies ; never, never, never. If you were in the habit of drinking a bottle of wine daily, reader, and your nose happened to be beet-root colour, with flourishing grog-blossoms—no, not grog-blossoms—but—let me see—eruptions in various stages of progress—scorbutic humour ; of course, no one thinks it is caused by anything else ; don't fancy for a single moment that they do, or you will be ri——, that is wrong ; would you entertain feelings of affectionate regard for any little urchin who in a pretty cheeky manner asked why your nose was red ? You would, I have not the slightest doubt in the world, eye him with glances the very reverse of savage, and always look upon him as a very smart little fellow, who

would make something some day, if properly looked after. Oh, you'd love him, and cherish him, wouldn't you? a good little fellow, to inquire so affectionately about your scorbutic humour. You wouldn't hate him, would you, or like to smother him if you only dare? No, not you; you're a decent fellow, you are, and like little lads to ask questions about your nose, don't you? Of course you do. Every one who is troubled with scorbutic humour — after drinking a bottle of wine daily — likes to be asked why his nose is red. It is nothing but natural; and you are not above being natural, and liking inquiries to be made about your phiz, are you? No, not you. You're a sensible fellow, you are—very; though your face is rather—very slightly — only your nose — disfigured by scorbutic humour.

After shaking hands, expressing a hope that the weather would continue fair, saying "No, go away!" to a beggar woman, and giving Mrs. Wilson a general invitation to dinner and tea (which, like all general invitations, meant: stop at home; don't visit where you're

not wanted), Mrs. Groome sailed off in the direction of another friend's (!) house, where she could procure another glass of wine, and squeeze out another sovereign for the Negro Conversion and Noo-Loo-Choo Missionary Association, for which it was her pleasing duty to collect, and to which Mrs. So-and-so and So-and-so had given so-and-so; and to which excellent Society, Mrs. Somebody must permit her to put down her name for the sum of—what might she say?

As she swept majestically along the streets, Mrs. Groome said to herself: "And so Mr. Wilson is a retired Manchester trader! well, I never! I always thought that he was a vulgar man. That accounts for it. I'll never go to his house again; and yet he keeps capital Madeira. But no; it's low to visit with Manchester cotton-lords. I squeeze a sovereign nicely out of Mrs. Wilson for the Negro Con — no; I've nothing for you—version Society. I tell you no; now go away, do, or I'll call the police to you, you idle, good-for-nothing, lazy creature;" and the lady-collector for the

Negro Conversion, and Noo-Loo-Choo Missionary Association, gathering her expensive clothes around her, swept past the rag-clad, famine-thinned, disease-worn girl, who, with upturned face, and in faltering accents, begged for one single halfpenny wherewith to buy a bit of bread ; which, if her humble petition were listened to, and the bread procured, would have been the only food that had passed her lips for four-and-twenty long hours. But, no ; the grand lady sailed on her way, with ribbons and feathers flying, whilst the poor beggar-girl, whose rags were utterly insufficient to protect her shrinking form from the cold searching wind, shivered and shook, and begged on.

Who cared for that poor girl ? Who cared, if want, hunger, and unknown misery drove her to a life of shame ; or—if she thought death preferable to dishonour—to suicide ? No one. Folks hum'd and hah'd, and passed by to their pleasures and their fooleries, without caring a fig about a future fellow-angel, or, more likely, fellow-devil, who was perishing, starving, dying, for want

of necessary sustenance. It was no business of theirs ; no, not it ; if that girl had fainted in the open street through exhaustion, and if her spirit had winged its flight to its eternal home, they would have pushed their way into the midst of the crowd that, as a matter of course, would have assembled around the lifeless form, and, after one gaze, emerge from the mass of gaping spectators, saying : “ Oh, it’s nothing ; it’s only a dead girl ;” and off they’d go, with a ti-rum ti-tiddle-um-tee.

Nothing ! Is a dead girl nothing ? She has a soul to be saved or lost, as well as the finest lady or gentleman in the land.

Though neglected, avoided, shunned, uncared for here, let us—you and I, reader—prayerfully trust that He who knoweth and observeth all things, will receive into His eternal, blissful home, the spirit of that poor, scorned beggar-girl ; the spirits of all world-crushed, poverty-stricken beings, who are spurned from beneath the very feet, as it were, of those inhuman creatures who, with curling lips and heads held aloft, speed

by the crouching mendicants who humbly implore alms, as though they were dogs, not beings of flesh and blood like themselves ; who pass on without deigning to cast one single glance upon them ; without thinking that they—those miserable specimens of humanity—are brothers in sin, members of the great human race, to save whom Christ bled upon the Cross. Look to it, ye rich men and women, whose hearts seem as if they were made of stone. See that ye help and aid the poor, instead of saying : down with them, down with them ; and, having got them down, keep them down, and make them live such lives of awful misery as may fitly be called living deaths. Look to it, ye rich men ; look to it, or woe betide ye. Even now your death-knells may be sounding ; and how will you look, think you, when you are called upon to give an account of the deeds done in the body ?

After the departure of Mrs. Groome, Mrs. Wilson, returning to her sitting-room,


proceeded to put away the wine and cake, thinking, that if they were left out, the servants (as servants are in the habit of doing such things when Missis is out of the way) might possibly help themselves to the good things ; and then, on being found out, lay the blame on—on the cat. O, cats, cats, cats, grievous are the sins imputed to you, and innumerable are the breakages and thefts with which you stand charged. To clear yourselves from blame, and prove yourselves innocent, is impossible, for your accusers—the whole army of domestic servants—are numberless as the grains of sand on the wave-washed shore. Like your oppressed two-legged fellow-animals, who are endowed with reason, though perhaps they don't always show it, you—falsely accused, and condemned without trial—must, like them, grin and abide. You are powerless, and therefore put upon. There is nothing strange in it. It is the way of the world. Is he down? yes ; keep him down, then—kick him—have at him—screw him—grind him—tear his inside out ; this is the way in

which a poor devil who is down deep in misery's black ditch is treated. Everyone gives him a shove downwards, and the piercing shrieks of the sinking wretch are as sweet music to the ears of his hellish tormentors. You, O cats, are like friendless human beings, weak and powerless, and therefore fit subjects for your betters to oppress, impute theft to, and tell lies about.

Having, then, put away the cake and wine, Mrs. Wilson, drawing her chair to the table, began to read, for the fifth time, the following letter from her lamb, her pet, her darling, her precious, her clever, handsome, intellectual, noble-hearted, fine-feeling, accomplished, unapproachable, incomparable, never-to-be-sufficiently-loved son, Henry.

"Dear Mother," it began. All letters begin with Dear, from that of a dun to his debtor, to the perfumed epistle of a lover to his mistress.

"Dear Mother—Now don't look blue when I say that I want some more brass. (Brass means money, I suppose. If Henry



had only been in a profession, he would never have learnt to make use of such words as brass ; it is all that horrid Manchester.) The last money that the Governor sent me is all done; life is so damned expensive here. (I am sure it is, in lodgings, and no comfort either.) I wonder how the deuce some fellows manage (I don't know, I'm sure) to rub on at all. Write at once, please (will write to day), and don't let the Governor see this letter (I won't, as my darling asks me not), or he'll kick up a perfect h—— of a row. (How forcibly Henry expresses himself.) Hoping to hear from you by return of post, I remain

“ Your affectionate Son,

“ Henry Wilson.”


After reading over once more this precious epistle, Mrs. Wilson leaned back in her chair, put on her considering cap, and began to puzzle her brains as to the best means of procuring the money for Henry. She thought, and thought, until a certain plan appeared feasible to her, and then sat

down and wrote a long, loving letter to her hopeful son, who, when he received it, said to himself, as he turned the paper from side to side, after carefully removing the bank-note which it contained: "Humph! what a lot of maternal twaddle. The old woman expects me to read the whole heap, I dare say. I hope she may catch me, that's all. She has sent me the blunt though, like a decent old brick." And, after cramming his clay full of Cavendish, Henry Wilson set out with the intention of spending the evening at a certain place that shall be nameless.

CHAPTER XL

IN consequence of his anxiety with respect to his future prospects, and his sorrowful regret at being placed in a position so uncongenial to him as the one he held at Brownlow and Stanton's, Ernest Milman's health began to fail. He felt weak, worn-out, and utterly incapable of attending to business. On applying to Mr. Brownlow for a fortnight's leave of absence, he was saluted with :

"Eh ! what—ill—fortnight off—why what the devil ails you, man? Well, you



must go, I suppose; it is very annoying though. Well, well, you may go—you may go."

So Milman went to the sea-side for a fortnight, and came back in good health. During his stay, he occupied his time in reading, writing, and thinking. He endeavoured to analyse his thoughts, to arrange and classify, as it were, his ideas, but did not succeed. It was very evident to him that hideous disparities existed in our social system. He saw brutes rich and in power; virtuous and moral men steeped to the very lips in poverty and woe. Why was this? How came it that vice triumphed, whilst virtue went unrewarded? How was it that sin-stained wretches lived in clover, whilst men whose conduct was blameless were unable to procure bread? Villains, if rich, were worshipped; whilst moral men, if poor, were kicked about and spurned. Money seemed to be the sole standard by which men were judged. Character, mode of life, and conduct generally, were as nothing. They did not make a man respected or


looked up to. Wealth, lands, possessions, were the qualities wherewith a man procured friendship. The friends of a rich man were innumerable; the friends of a poor man could not be counted. The former had too many friends; the latter was alone in the wide world. The poor man might starve—all right, let him starve. The rich man could do no wrong; the poor man was always doing wrong. How was it?

Were rich men really better than poor men? If not, why were they fawned upon and flattered? Why did men treat them with deference; whilst they regarded the poor with keep-your-distance looks? Equal they came into the world; equal they would leave it. Rich and poor were both dust—both the creations of the Almighty—both sinners, to save whom Christ died. Where lay the difference between them? One had a little more gold, lived in a larger house, dressed better, and changed his linen or cotton oftener than the other. He drank wine and ate good dinners; whilst his poorer neighbour drank water and ate when he

could get any thing to eat. The one lay upon a bed of down; whilst the other slept anyhow or any where. The one lived and grew fat; the other existed and grew thin. The rich man rode past the poor man, and his horse shied at the ragged apparition. As he went by, he said, "D—n it, man, why the deuce can't you stand out of the way, there?" The poor man, painfully dragging himself along the roadside, muttered between his set teeth, "Blast thee to h——, thou stuck-up b——." The rich man, with his belly well filled, went to church on Sundays, and sat in a cushioned pew. The poor man, with an empty stomach, stayed at home, and sat listening to his children's cries for bread—bread. The church-goer was called a Christian; the stayer-at-home a heathen. The one heard a sermon preached on Heaven and Happiness; the other realized a sermon on Hell and Misery. Comfort was the lot of the rich man; soul-wringing woe the lot of the poor man. Why were these things? Why did some men revel in abundance, whilst

others wanted bread ? Why did wealthy people roll by in splendid carriages, whilst the poverty-stricken and the penniless crawled along, barefoot ? Why were not temporal comforts distributed more equally ? Why were some people so excessively rich, whilst others were so deplorably poor ?

Ernest could not answer these questions ; for he was but a youth, and inexperienced. As he grew older, however, the scales fell from his eyes and he saw. The dark, black, dread-inspiring spectacle of a God-created world, steeped in hellish sins and cursed with devil-bred wickedness, caused him to ask himself the question, " Does a gracious and sin-hating Being watch over this earth, and yet keep silence ? "



CHAPTER XII.

BEING very busy one day, Ernest, instead of going home to dinner, went to a restaurant, near the warehouse, where he could obtain any thing that he required at once, and thus save the three quarters of an hour that were consumed in walking to and from home. He detested dining in town. The crumb-strewn, dirty table-cloths, the black-hafted knives and forks, the close, dinnery smell, the measured quantity of food, the greasy, oily mess into which the filthy thumb of the waiter was invariably stuck, the unhome-like aspect of every thing, made him hate dining at public restaurants. He felt

as if he were a wild beast going to feed. It struck him that for an appropriate sign over the entrance to a dining-room, the proprietor might put, "Human animals may procure good feeds here for a shilling a head. Excellent beef from horses just killed. First-rate snail soup and jugged cat every day. No charge for servants. N.B.—A room for smoking. Excellent cabbage-leaves provided by the *properièter*."

He felt disgusted when he saw men laboriously eating, gobbling, stuffing, cramming, until their faces grew red and flushed, until the veins stood prominently out on their foreheads, and the greasy sweat trickled in long streams down their inflamed countenances, whence it fell with a flopping drop, drop, upon the yellow table-cloth, on which perhaps the next feeder would, before he began to eat, carefully, and as he would think wisely, wipe his three-pronged, black-hafted, and dirt-encrusted fork. He felt miserable when he heard a fat, red-faced fellow sing out, "Glass o' ale, waitor, and look sharp;" and watched the animal, after

holding the glass between himself and the light, put it to his lips, and, after swilling down the contents, strike the dirty tablecloth with his unwashed fist, and swear that, "By Jove, th' ale were stunning, and no mistake." He groaned within himself when he heard some beardless hobbledehoy, in a lilac-checked shirt, red-mixture monkey-jacket, and red, white, and blue necktie (the last thing out), say to a simpering waitress, "H-H-Hemily, I say, H-Hemily, what the dooce is there for dinnor, dear? Can't do with any of your demmed underdone steaks or chops, you know. Got any venison, H-Hemily?" He felt as if he could never read a newspaper again, when he saw an old fogey, with a running nose, poring over a greasy "Times," slavering away with his food, bobbing his dirty, grey head down to the flabby, brownny paper, slavering away again, wiping his nose on his coat-sleeve, gnawing vigorously at a bone held in his clawy fingers, and then grabbing at the "Times" again.

Every thing that Ernest Milman heard,



ate, and saw at a public dining-room, sickened and disgusted him ; but occasionally he was obliged to dine in town for the purpose of saving time. Business must be attended to, time must not be wasted ; for, in Manchester, time is money.

Upon the day in question, Milman, after taking his seat and ordering dinner, looked round the room to see if he knew any one present with whom he could have a little chat ; but all were strangers. At a table near him sat two young men, apparently officers ; at least they wore moustaches, were well dressed, and frequently said “ demmy.” These are the distinguishing signs, we believe, by which the men who are placed in command over their fellow-men—though double their age and possessing ten times as much sense, generally, that is to say—are recognized as officers, holders of expensive commissions in Her Majesty’s gallant army.

“ At what hour did you leave old Brown’s last night, or rather this morning, Neville, eh ?” asked one.

“Haw! I think, haw! it was about two; but really, haw! I did not take particular notice,” was the hawing reply.

“Rum old codger, old Brown, was’nt he?”

“Haw! yaas, yaas; queer old dog, very; yaas, haw!”

“He made a demmed fool of himself at the supper-table. Were you there, Neville?”

“Yaas, I was there.”

“You heard him make that speech, then?”

“About his money, eh? Yaas, I heard it; ha, ha, ha!”

“Rich, was’nt it? The old fool must have been screwed.”

“Let’s see, haw! he said that the folks might eat and drink—haw!—their bellies full; didn’t he?—haw!—for, that he’d lots of money—haw!—to buy more stuff when the decks were cleared, haw! Good joke, very, ’pon honour; ha, ha, ha! ha, ha, ha!”

“He said, also, that he had had a good stock-taking — what the devil’s that, I wonder?—and that he could buy up every

body there. Polite, certainly, very, dem him," observed Mr. Lascelles.

"See that girl in pink-silk dress, Fred.?" asked Neville.

"A little, fat, ill-dressed, vulgar-looking, cottony-smelling, speckled-faced—"

"Steady, boy—haw!—steady, draw it mild," cried out Neville. "Know her?"

"Not I," replied Lascelles. "I heard her name, though—Miss, Miss, Miss."

"Jones," suggested Neville.

"Jones, no; not Jones, dem it; Tomkinson, Robinson, Higginson, ah! I have it, Jenkinson, that's the name, Miss Ophelia Betty Jenkinson."

"Told you—haw!—her Christian name, eh, haw?" asked Neville.

"Yes," replied Lascelles, "Ophelia, she said, was the name of her great great grandmother, who kept a grocer's shop and saved fifty pounds—ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Neville. "Waitor, bottle of sherry."

"Yizzir; coming, sir."

"And Betty?"

"Was the name of—let me see, what the dooce, the name of, oh!—Brown's maternal parent, who took in washing, and sold toffy and besoms."

"Did she really!" exclaimed Neville;
"ha, ha, ha—ha, ha, ha!"

"These Manchester girls have got money though, Phil.—though they are so demmed vulgar."

"Haw—what's money—haw—when the breed's bad?" sagely observed Neville.

"Why a fellow might almost take up with a low-bred girl, Phil. if she'd got lots of the needful—eh?"

"Haw—no, no," said Neville, decidedly;
"no—haw—it does'nt do—haw—to mix pure blood with—haw—Manchester puddle."

"Why no, perhaps not. These Cotton Lords are demmed vulgar, and no mistake. It would be lowering oneself too much to marry one of their blowsy daughters."

"Yaas, no doubt of it," observed Neville. "And yet—haw—the old Governor would think—haw—that he was honoring—haw—a poor devil by giving him his—haw

—red-armed and red-faced Jane Mary Anne. Money—not blood—haw—not education—haw—is the standard by which—haw—Manchester men judge their fellows. Low—demmed low.”

“ Ah, well, well,” exclaimed Lascelles; “ they are shocking blackguards; but they give demmed good dinners; therefore we won’t cut the connection. They think, like fools, that men of birth, breeding, and position, visit them for friendship’s sake. Idiots! They cannot see that they are simply tolerated in society, because they are rich, because they can give splendid entertainments, and so on. They fancy, poor creatures, that they are on a par with gentlemen. They! those common, vulgar, coarse, stuck-up, cottony, money-grubbing, Manchester men on a par with us!—with officers—with gentlemen!—faugh—the very idea makes one sick. You might as easily make a cart-horse into a racer, as a Manchester man into a gentleman. A Cotton Lord is, in a word, vulgarity personified.

“ But come, Neville, let us be off. You’ve

finished your wine, have'nt you? Waitor!
where the dooce are you? Waitor! I say."

"Coming, sir—Yizzir."

"What's to pay, dem you?"

"Let me see, sir. Two oxtails is one and four, and one sole is ten, and small beef ten—one and eight. One and eight, and one four is...is...two and ten. No, no...is ...is...three...yes, three...and one college, four...three and four. You'd plum tartlet, I think, sir? Plum tartlet, four...three and four and four is three and eight, and two ales—"

"Ales! dem your ales! Who the dooce takes ale to dinner, think you?" growled Lascelles.

"No ales! Beg pardon; many gents drinks our ales to their dinners though. Keeps capital ale, we does; strong, and clear, and sparkling. We is noted for our ales. Three and eight, and...and a salary, three...three and eight, and three, is three and eleven...and two cheeses is four...that is four and three. Nothing else, I think, gents?" said the waiter, interrogatively.

"Sherry," observed Lascelles.


"To be sure, sir; prime sherry too, wer'nt it? I keep a bottle of that ere sherry for my own drinking. I'm tickler about my wine. Sherry, five shillings; and dirt cheap too. Four and three, and five, is nine and three. Nine three, gents, please.

"Thank you, sir—thank you," exclaimed the individual who kept prime sherry for his own drinking, as Lascelles gave him half a sovereign, and told him to put the change in his pocket. "Knew by your looks as how you was gents; none o' your common scrubs. I wish you a very good day, gents; and trusts as how I may hoften ave the igh honor of waiting upon tiptoppers like you. Good day, good day."

And after bowing out the two young officers, waiter returned to the dining room, crying, "Yizzir; coming, sir. One steak pudding did you say, sir? Yizzir." And going to a corner of the room, he called out, "One steak pudding, two ales, and a porter, also a hox-tail, and a mock."

After finishing dinner, for which he paid

a modest shilling, Ernest Milman, without waiting a single moment, walked off rapidly towards the warehouse. As he walked, he meditated upon the foregoing conversation. He thought to himself, Manchester men are looked down upon by the higher ranks of society. They are regarded as purse-proud blackguards. This being the case, why do they endeavour to associate with their despisers? They are blind, blind. Where is their pride? They have none, save of wealth. In manly dignity and self-respect they are wanting. Wealth, wealth, wealth, is their all, their aim, their God. And if Manchester men are thus looked down upon, how must their assistants—their clerks and warehousemen—be regarded? Is a man less a man because he is poor? Am I, with my aspirations, my hopes, my longings, inferior to those two young men, whose lips seemed to curl involuntarily as they spoke of the vulgarity and the purse-pride of the men of Manchester? Am...but now for work, work; for that mechanical drudgery which I detest.



So Ernest bent himself to his work, and entered, wrote, and cast out, for seven long, weary hours. Then he went home to bed; and when he fell asleep, the pillow on which his head lay was wet with his youthful tears.

Those tears were wrung from him like so many blood-drops. He wept like a man, with pangs of awful agony. Though young in years, he was old in mind; and he felt as none but sensitive men do feel. As he lay, slumbering peacefully, with his dark brown hair pushed back from his noble brow, he looked as if he were specially designed by Nature for intellectual pursuits. And yet he was in a Manchester warehouse; that hot-bed of vice; that place of slavery; that grave of intellect, and self-respect, and purity; that cursed hole in which thousands upon thousands of as fine young fellows as ever stepped have been ruined and undone, both for time and for eternity.

CHAPTER XIII.


"Is Mr. Brownlow in?" asked a well-dressed man, one day, as he stood at the counting-house door? "I will see, sir," said Ernest, who happened at the moment to be the nearest to him.

He knocked at the door of the private office.

"Well," growled the bear inside.

"A gentleman wishes to speak to you, sir," said Ernest.

"Who is he? What is he? Where does he come from? What is his name—eh?" asked Mr. Brownlow.



"I don't know, sir," replied Ernest;
"he—"

"Don't know, sir!" cried Mr. Brownlow—
—"don't know! Then why the devil don't you know? Look here, sir. If any one enquires for me, ask him his name—what does he want—where does he come from—and get to know every thing about him. Do you understand? How do I know that this fellow is not some d——d methodistical sneak or another. However, show him in." The next moment, the 'methodistical sneak' entered the room.

"I—I called, sir, to see—"

"Keep your hat on, sir; keep your hat on," cried Mr. Brownlow. ("I was poor myself once," added a young man who happened to overhear the words.)

"To see if—"

"Well, sir," said Mr. Brownlow.

"If—if you—"

"Well, sir, well; get on, get on."

"Could buy a...a..."

"A what, sir?" asked Mr. Brownlow impatiently.

“ An interesting work on Botany, sir ? ”

“ You and your Botany go and be hanged ! ” roared Mr. Brownlow. “ Do you think that I have nothing better to do, than buy your rubbishing books on Botany ? Off, sir ! and don’t show your face here again. Off, I say.”

The ‘ methodistical sneak ’ vanished.

“ Milman ! ”

Ernest entered the office.

“ All through your inattention, sir, I’ve been bored by that fellow with his d——d Botany book. Now, hark ye. If you ever again let a fellow come in without asking his name and business, I’ll ship you, sir—ship you on the spot. Do you understand that, sir ? There, you may go.”

Ernest left the office with a swelling heart. He felt as if he should like to put on his hat, walk out of the warehouse, and never again enter its doors. But then there was his mother. She thought that he could not possibly be better placed than he was placed at Brownlow and Stanton’s. He had never told her his troubles. She was en-

tirely ignorant of the trials that he had to undergo. She believed that Mr. Brownlow would keep the promises that he had made about advancement, promotion, and salary. She did not know that a Manchester man is so much in the habit of telling lies, that he sometimes entirely forgets the meaning of the word truth. Ernest had never told his mother how he hated and abhorred every thing connected with his business. How can a youth, who possesses a refined and sensitive mind, like life in a Manchester warehouse? The thing is impossible. The crushing, grinding system that Manchester merchants think fit to pursue, is enough to drive a youth—unless he be a dolt and an ignorant ass—almost mad. He is not expected to think. He is simply a machine, a piece of mechanism to be worked in any way that their imperial highnesses—his low-bred and narrow-minded masters—may think proper. If a young man ventures to assert his independence, he is shouted at for an hour, and then told that he must leave that day month. Manchester masters will not

allow their young men to think and judge for themselves. It is downright rebellion for an employé to have an opinion of his own. He is a clerk—not a man; a warehouseman—not a thinking being. The supply of mercantile assistants is always much greater than the demand, and employers think that the young men in their warehouses should sit down quietly, and be thankful for what they can get. Thankful for sixty pounds a year, at five-and-twenty years of age; and to obtain even that beggarly sum, a young man must sink his self-respect, and submit to be cursed, and talked to, and shouted at, by a rich blackguard, who never did know, and never will know, how to behave himself properly.


It is true that there are scores and hundreds of young men in Manchester warehouses who are not worth their salt; but it is likewise true that there are scores and hundreds of able, industrious, and intelligent young men who never have opportunities of getting on afforded them; and who, instead of being treated like gentlemen, are ordered

about like dogs. As to feelings—a clerk, or a warehouseman, is not expected to have any feelings. Feelings, indeed ! Feelings for a young man in a Manchester warehouse—the very idea is ridiculous. Feelings are only for rich people, not for poor employés. An employé is expected to work, and grub, and toil on, from the age of thirteen or fourteen to the day of his death, without lifting up his voice against the tyranny by which he is oppressed, and without daring even to dream of bettering his condition. If he were to ask for an increase of salary, the chances are ten to one that either he would be at once discharged, or else have his paltry salary docked five or ten pounds for presuming to ask for increased remuneration. Should old age render a man comparatively unable to attend to those duties which he has discharged faithfully for perhaps twenty long years, he is at once sent about his business, and is at liberty to go either to the warehouse or the grave—whichever he prefers. When sickness overtakes a man, word is sent to him that his services are no longer

required, and the penniless sufferer may waste away on his bed; and, finally, when the bed is taken away for rent, die—perfectly undisturbed—on the bare floor. Do his employers care? Not they. They squeeze all the work out of him that they could possibly squeeze, and then—why then—he might die, and welcome; they'd done with him—there was nothing more to be got out of him—he might kick the bucket as soon as he liked. There is no rule, however, without an exception. The majority of Manchester men are undoubtedly hard-hearted tyrants; but here and there is a merchant to be found, who knows how to conduct himself like a Christian and a gentleman. Such cases are, however, rare. Forty-nine out of every fifty are screwing, crushing, grinding tyrants; who delight in oppressing the persons employed by them, and who glory in making them feel that they are penniless, and therefore unable to help themselves. Without money, what can a man do? Nothing.

It may be said that the foregoing remarks


are unjust and unfair; that they are not true. So be it. The author knows that they are true, or he would not have made them. He cares not one straw whether he is stigmatized as a liar or not. He stands alone, and cares not if all the men that Manchester contains assert that his statements are not true. He hates, abhors, and despises Manchester men from his very soul. He has seen so much of their meanness, their duplicity, their grinding, crushing systems, that he knows not how to express—in language sufficiently strong—the feelings of detestation and abhorrence with which he has ever regarded, and will ever look upon, their mode of conducting business. Money is coined out of the flesh and blood of employés, who, the moment that sickness or incapacity overtakes them, are turned into the street penniless, to suffer, starve, and die. Long years of hard toil are as nothing. The striving care and persevering industry with which a man has endeavoured to discharge the duties peculiar to his position, and the unceasing diligence with which he



has for many years endeavoured to satisfy—by watchful attention to their affairs—the most unreasonable demands of his employers, are of no avail. These things are all unheeded, passed over, and disregarded. A Manchester man cares no more for one whom he has employed, and who has fallen ill in his service, than he cares for the stone that he kicks aside out of his path, or the worm that writhes, and twists, and turns beneath his heel. To the feelings of a Christian—of a man—of a sensitive being—he is utterly dead. In the pursuit of wealth, all natural feelings and emotions have been swamped. To Mammon he has sacrificed everything that refines and elevates mankind.

Selfish, tyrannical, and unfeeling, he lives on, accumulating riches, and amassing that wealth, which, in a few short years, he will have to leave. What will it avail him on that day when he will have to meet his Maker, face to face? Nothing—less than nothing.

The very name of a Manchester man is



enough to inspire one with dislike. A picture of a coarse, vulgar, low-bred, red-faced, uneducated, shouting blackguard, at once presents itself to our view. 'The old saying is perfectly true—"Liverpool gentlemen and Manchester men." They do not know the meaning of the word "gentleman." The very idea of a Manchester man endeavouring to make a gentleman of himself is enough to make one laugh, if one can condescend to laugh at men whose proceedings generally are such as to sink them so low as even to render them unworthy of contempt.

Money, money, money, in Manchester, is everything. If a man be rich, why he can do anything, and go anywhere; but if poor, why the sooner he goes to the devil, the better. A poor man is never tolerated in Manchester — never — never. A god-like being, the light of whose genius had illumined the world, and whose almost more than human intellectual powers had attracted and riveted the attention and admiration of all thinking men, would not, if poor, be received by the men of Manchester.

But, bah!—why speak of them? They are incapable of comprehending anything, save the yarns, and cloth, and cotton, amidst which their lives are spent.

CHAPTER XIV.

"I SAY, Milman, if you are going home, let us walk together," said Leslie, one evening.

"Very well, Charles ; I shall be ready directly. Just wait one minute, there's a good fellow."

In five minutes the friends were walking together down Oxford Road. For some time they walked on in silence. At last, Leslie said, "You look very glum to-night, Milman ; what's the matter ?"

"Oh, nothing—nothing," replied Ernest ; "at least, nothing particular." After a pause, he added, "Did you notice a gentleman on horseback, in St. Peter's Square ?"

"A tall, dark man, mounted on a splendid bay mare? Yes, I noticed him," replied Leslie.

"Well—that man was my father's most intimate friend, and—"

"Why, he cut you dead," exclaimed Leslie.

"Yes, yes," said Ernest, bitterly; "he cut me, as you say, dead; stared at me as if I were a perfect stranger. Well, so be it. I am none the worse, that I know of. That man, Charles, used to come to our house almost every day, and always received a warm welcome. He frequently dined with my father, and nothing was too good for him. On more than one occasion, I know that my father advanced him large sums of money, which have never to this day been repaid. For all of us he testified the warmest friendship, and he was at all times treated like one of the family. And yet, Charles, when, soon after my poor father's death, my mother asked him to lend her five pounds for a short time—for we were, as I have told you before, left destitute—he

refused—coolly refused, Charles—saying that really he could not assist everybody who chose to apply to him, and advised my mother to ask her relatives; as if relatives, forsooth, were always ready and willing to lend a helping hand. And this was my father's friend; this was the man who had sat at our table, an ever-welcome guest; this the man to whom my father had freely lent money, portions of which had never been repaid. Oh, when I think of such miserable meanness, my blood boils within me. I—I could do—I don't know what I couldn't do, when I think of such things. How paltry, how unmanly, how detestable is such conduct. Really, I begin to believe that there is no such thing as friendship. Everyone seems so cold and heartless, and destitute of feeling. When a person requires the sympathy and help of a friend the most, then is friendship almost sure to be withdrawn. In times of poverty, friends—fine friends, truly!—sneak off, one by one, until the penniless man stands alone, unheeded, uncared for, and forgotten. If a man has never served

an apprenticeship, as it were, to poverty, he is unable to form correct ideas about the world. To a rich man, everything appears bright and pleasant, whilst a poor man sees before him only a future of toil and trouble and woe. People talk about friendship; about the affinity of kindred souls, and so on. Bah! it is all twaddle. There is no friendship, save pocket friendship. One man will be friendly with another man so long as he can get anything out of him, and then, good-bye. If the money increases, friendship increases; but, if the money decreases, then the friendship gradually dwindles away until it is only a thing that has been. A man must be a friend to himself, for he can trust no one. All men are false, deceitful, and wealth-worshippers; all. But enough of this. What are you going to do with yourself this evening, Leslie?"

"Oh, I don't know," replied Charles; read, I suppose, as usual."

"What are you reading, if it be a fair question?"

"The Newcomes."

"By Thackeray?"

"Yes."

"Well, how do you like it?"

"Oh, pretty well. It is not so interesting as the 'Count of Monte Christo,' though. Capital book, that."

"But you like Thackeray?"

"Pretty well."

"Oh, but you must like his works, you know. It is the fashion just at present to admire the Author of 'Vanity Fair' and 'Pendennis.'"

"Is it?" said Leslie; "is it, indeed? But tell me how you like 'The Newcomes,' Milman; for a great reader like you must have read the last work of a popular writer?"

"Though not a great reader in the way you mean, Leslie," said Milman, "I have read 'The Newcomes,' and I think that a man who possesses the genius that Thackeray evidently does, is to be blamed—I say it deliberately, blamed—for spending so much time, labour, and talent, in writing works composed without any higher aim than to amuse thousands and tens of thou-

sands of his novel-reading countrymen and countrywomen. Thackeray is a man of extraordinary talent, which, if properly directed, might have gained him a name that would have lived in men's memories for centuries. As it is, he is simply a novelist—a writer of fiction—a man who prostitutes his talents for the amusement of the gaping, grinning, brainless multitude. He writes to please the people. He writes to please men and women whom he cannot but despise. He lowers his God-like talents to write such trash as 'The Fatal Boots,' and 'Cox's Diary.' Bah! for a clever, intellectual man to write such complete rubbish—such stuff! why it is a disgrace to him. His writings, no matter how silly, absurd, and ridiculous they may be, are admired, because it is the fashion to admire them. Fashion! how I hate that word. Every well-dressed idiot in England runs wild after Thackeray's works, because they are the fashion; and he or she, therefore, must needs read them. Every contemptible humbug, who is trying to wriggle himself into

what he considers fashionable society, feels it incumbent upon him to read 'The Newcomes,' and express his opinion that Clive is a demmed decent fellow, and that the characters throughout are devilishly well drawn. No one who visits in fashionable circles must leave 'The Newcomes' unread. And yet not one out of fifty, who go into raptures when speaking of Thackeray, is capable of giving a common-sense opinion on any ordinary subject.

"There is no one thing under the sun so utterly contemptible as a worshipper of fashion. O fool! fool! fool! for God's sake get some sense into your empty noddle; for it is absolutely painful to meditate upon your shallow character.

"Thackeray is a genius; Thackeray is a man of singular talent; Thackeray is a man gifted with remarkable powers; but he is only now at the bottom of that hill of Fame, at the extreme summit of which he might have stood, if his abilities had been directed to something higher and more worthy of him than the composition of

those paltry works which have made the name of William Makepeace Thackeray almost as familiar to most people as the name of a member of their own family.

“There are scattered up and down in his works singularly beautiful passages; and there are also sentences that a child would be ashamed to have written. Every now and then you come upon a master-stroke of sarcasm; then again you have to wade drearily through long pages of trash and twaddle. Occasionally, you meet with a passage that bears strong testimony to the genius of the writer; but more frequently you read paragraphs that seem to say: a would-be popular writer composed us; a panderer to the tastes of the senseless human herd wrote these words.

“O, Thackeray, Thackeray, in striving after popularity, you have cast aside your independence as a writer; and, in truckling for fame, you have written rubbish, to which the veriest simpleton, who ever put pen to paper, in the hope—as he, poor fool! fondly dreamt—of attaining literary immor-

talities — would be ashamed to append his name. Though every man and woman in Great Britain, O Thackeray, sang your praises and quoted from your writings, yet would I, your admirer, yet your despiser, your very humble and most obedient servant, lift up my feeble voice and say : that your talents have not been used as they ought to have been, and that your genius has been prostituted for the sake of acquiring frothy popularity. You might have written books that would have lived for ever—for you have the power ; but you chose to write rubbish and trash, suited to the comprehension of your patrons, the readers of novels, and amusing books in general. The popularity that you have obtained is not worth having ; for no one knows better than you yourself, the fickleness and inconstancy of a brainless mob. A new writer may any day come into the field, who, if his books be trashy, and amusing enough to suit the mass, may cut out Mr. Thackeray, and turn the stream of popularity in his own favour. Then what will become of the clever, intel-

lectual man, who wrote for the favour of the people, instead of erecting for himself a literary monument, built with such painstaking and skilful care as to endure for all time? He will share the fate of all mere popularity seekers — go spark out — and truckler number two shall reign in his stead.”

“By Jove, Milman,” cried Leslie, as Ernest wound up his treasonable discourse on the short-comings of—to use a newspaper phrase—the eminent novelist, “you had better deliver a lecture at the Athenæum, on ‘The Newcomes,’ by Thackeray. It wouldn’t sound bad, you know—‘At the request of the Directors, Ernest Milman, Esq. M.R. L.S. &c. &c. &c. has kindly undertaken to deliver a—’”

“Now don’t laugh at me, Charles, there’s a good fellow,” said Ernest. “I don’t often express my opinions so freely; but, to you, I rather like to say what I think. Although I am an advocate for reserve, still I do not think it well for any person to keep all his thoughts to himself. Don’t you agree with

me in thinking that Thackeray might have done greater things than he has done?"


"Well now, Milman," replied Leslie, "I am not able to say. I don't read as you read. I like a good tale, full of love, and adventure, and murders, and that sort of thing, you know; but, as to the ability of the author, and so on, why—I never give it a thought, and that's the long and short of the matter. I don't study the author's character, as you apparently are in the habit of doing. All I've got to do with him is, if I don't like his book, why—I pitch it aside, and get another; that's all."

"You won't acquire much information by reading in that manner, Charles," observed Milman.


"Oh! information be bothered," cried Leslie, impatiently. "I don't read for information—I read for amusement. I had a capital book, the other day, 'Frank Hilton, or The Queen's Own.' By Jove, just wasn't it a stunner. You read novels occasionally, Milman, don't you?"

"Yes, sometimes," replied Ernest: "I


am not one of those narrow-minded beings who think that the reading of novels is always injurious. Indeed I think that it is advisable, at times, to read a well-written novel; for, by so doing, one acquires some slight knowledge of what is passing on in that—to us almost unknown—world; of which, if we did not occasionally read a novel, we could form no sort of idea whatever. If we were never to read anything but grave, instructive, heavy works, such as Commercial Dictionaries, Treatises on Book-keeping, Histories of Cotton Spinning, and so on, we should but half live. Manchester is not all the world, though Manchester men and their employés seem to think so. There are other cities, and other people, than Manchester, and its inhabitants. If we did not now and then read a novel, how should we know anything of life? Tied down as we are in Manchester, we should—if we did not sometimes read a good novel—grow up in utter ignorance of the manner in which thousands and tens of thousands of our fellow-creatures live.



“ A novel is a picture of life ; and, as it is the duty of every man to study life, why he must read carefully-selected novels, if he does not wish to grow up in utter ignorance of everything that does not take place within the immediate sphere of his own personal observation. There are some novels — a very large number indeed—that it would be a complete waste of time to wade through ; perhaps, I should say, that it would be positively injurious for any one to read them. But there are, on the other hand, large numbers of well-written works, from a perusal of which, much knowledge of every kind may be gleaned ; and, from a careful study of whose contents much valuable information may be derived. In some of the first-rate novels, there are characters delineated, so honorable, so noble-minded, so manly, or so feminine, so amiable, and so good, that it cannot but be advantageous for youths of both sexes to meditate upon, and carefully study them. You say that they are fictitious personages. Granted. But any one with ordinary common sense




can discriminate between a character that might possibly exist, and one so overpoweringly good, and great, and generous, and what not, as to cause poor frail every-day mortals to sink despairingly into their shoes, penetrated by a painful sense of their utter inability to cope for a single moment with such a transcendent being. Besides, a book in which unnatural characters are drawn, must not be read. To read it, would be—to use the mildest term—a waste of time. And yet, even if a character were described to be so surpassingly good and clever as almost to shame humanity, what possible harm could the contemplation of it do to any young person who was carefully studying the workings of the human mind, with a view to raise himself in the scale of being? It is always well for a young man to have an ideal—to watch, with his mind's eye, a model man—one raised above the follies and absurdities of the world, and striving after higher things than the coarse and sensual pleasures pursued by men of gross natures. And if a young man does not study charac-



ter by reading good novels, how on earth is he to understand, I should like to know, those workings of the human mind, which—under the pressure of certain circumstances—prompt men to live moral lives, or the contrary? How can he, if he does not read good novels, become acquainted with the modes of thinking, manners of living, and so forth, of men whose lives are passing away like his own, and of whose very existence, if he never opened a novel, he would live and die in ignorance? In defiance of all the old fogies who hate the very sight and name of novels, I venture to assert, that the youth who reads only what are commonly called dry books, without occasionally perusing a well-composed novel, is neglecting to acquire that knowledge of life and men which will be more advantageous to him in his future life than an acquaintance with all the dull heavy books that ever were written. Young ladies are very frequently not allowed to even peep into a novel: and what is the consequence? Why they subscribe secretly to some circulating library, whence they ob-

tain the most rubbishing love-tales that ever were penned. Whereas, if their parents would only permit them to read occasionally a well-written novel, they would not be tempted to smuggle trash into the house for secret perusal ; and by reading carefully selected tales they would obtain a knowledge of the world, and derive information of various kinds, that they could not possibly acquire by any other means. I care not if every ancient stager breathing says that my ideas about novel-reading are absurd. I know that what I say is true, and am therefore indifferent to any thing that they may advance. A Manchester man would say that a novel-reader was a fool ; but the minds of Manchester men are so narrow, that they are incapable of judging of any thing, except the price of cotton, and the market value of a 39-inch 16 picks. As to literature, a Manchester man knows nothing in the world about it. There is no profit to be got out of it ; and therefore why should he trouble his head about a thing out of which nothing is to be made. A Manches-



ter man reads "Markets for manufactures," in the Guardian, and the leading article in the Times; but as to books, what are books? He has something else to do than read books. He has his goods to sell, and his money to make. Books!—pshaw!—fit only for parsons and women, who have got nothing better to do than read them. Heigh-ho! The men of Manchester, although they are so big in their own eyes, are wretchedly small in the eyes of others."

"Bravo, Ernest!" cried Leslie, as Milman finished off his second oration. "Lecture, No 2, on Novels and Novelists, will be delivered (D. V.)—always stick D. V. in, it brings the godly—in the Lecture Room of the Athenæum, which has been kindly lent for the occasion, by the justly celebrated—"

"There, there, Charles, that will do," said Ernest. "If I have bored you, I beg your pardon. I did not mean to do so."

"Bored me, my dear fellow!" exclaimed Leslie; "I assure you—— but come in, and have some coffee with me."

"Not to-night, thank you," said Ernest.

“ I must go home. My mother will be waiting tea for me. Good night.”

“ Good night, then, if you won’t stay. Good night.”

So Leslie went in to his coffee, and Milman walked slowly homewards, musing, meditating, thinking about a great many things, but most of all about his prospects in life.

On reaching home, he took tea ; and after conversing with his mother for some time, went up, about ten o’clock, to his bedroom.

For three hours he sat up, as usual, writing his diary, reading, and meditating upon things in general.

Then he put out his candle, got into bed, and slept the sweet, dreamless, refreshing sleep of a little child.

CHAPTER XV.

"MILMAN!" shouted Mr. Brownlow, one day.

"Sir," said Ernest, as he walked into the private counting-house.

"Mr. Stanton and I have been talking about you to-day. You have been with us three years, I think."

"Yes, sir, I have," replied Ernest.

"Well, it is time that you were put into the rooms now. On Monday you will leave the counting-house. A new apprentice will take your place. You will go into the white and grey room, under Johnson. He will put you into the way; and understand now, that you will have to work, work hard, sir;

do you hear? Carry and lift, and keep stock, sir. We want workers here, sir; we don't want gentlemen."

"I am sure that Mr. Milman will do his duty," observed Mr. Stanton, who always praised the young men when he could do so safely, and who always endeavoured to make them both feel and look excessively small, when the time for making arrangements about salary drew near.

"I have not, I think, gentlemen, given you any cause to be dissatisfied with my conduct hitherto," said Ernest, interrogatively.

"No, no, no fault to find—none," said Mr. Brownlow. "Your conduct has been highly satisfactory, Mr. Milman," edged in Mr. Stanton.

"I have always done, and shall always do, my very best to please you, gentlemen," observed Ernest. "I cannot say more."

"No, no—do your best—all we ask—all we want," cried Mr. Brownlow.

"I am sure that Mr. Milman's conduct will ever be such as to meet with our approval," said Mr. Stanton, soapingly.

“ Yes, yes—work away, Milman, and you’ll manage. Begin on Monday, in Johnson’s room. There, you may go ; that’s all.”

Ernest walked quietly away.

On the Monday, he left the counting-house, where he had toiled on patiently for three years. He felt as if he had taken one step onwards, although the position of counter-duster and room-degger and sweeper was scarcely superior to that of desk-duster and gum-pot-filler. Still, however trifling, it was promotion ; and any sort of promotion was better than none.

So, on the Monday morning, Ernest went into the White and Grey room, and commenced learning his business by degging the floor, and then sweeping it, after collecting all the empty bleachers’ wrappers.

A very gentleman-like occupation truly, my reader may perhaps exclaim. Think you so, sir ? But, gentlemen, you know, are not wanted in Manchester warehouses. There is no such word known as gentleman. Youths of education and intelligence become

light porters, load-carriers, and so on; but gentlemen! really there is no demand for the article in Cottonopolis—the animal is extinct. Manchester men, when they make use of the word gentleman, mean a fool, who wears primrose-coloured kids, sports fancy neckerchiefs, grows a tuft on his chin, and who will not work for fear of crushing his collars. They do not know what a true gentleman is. They imagine that a youth of education will not work; for they think that he is—as they phrase it—above his place. The commonest, strong-limbed, open-mouthed, country gawky, who has not got a second idea, will, if he can only read and write, stand a much better chance of getting on, than the most refined and gentlemanly youth who was ever doomed to waste his precious days in a levelling Manchester warehouse. Strong bodies are wanted, not cultivated minds; rough scrubs, not educated gentlemen.

“Well, Milman,” said Johnson, a nasty, dirty, ignorant blackguard, who had the

management of the department, "when are we to have it in?"

"Have what in?" asked Ernest, innocently.

"Why the wet, man, to be sure; what else?"

"Wet, wet?"

"Aye, man, blast it! th' beer, you know; your footing. You'll have to pay your footing, you know. Every chap as comes new into t'rooms has to pay footing—stand wet for fellows in t'rooms."

"Footing! beer!" said Ernest, "I do not see why I should stand beer. If you want beer, you can buy it for yourselves, I suppose. I have nothing in the world to do with it."

"Ah! but every chap as comes upstairs, stands treat for those as is up afore him, you know," said Johnson.

"Every one may, of course, do as he thinks proper," said Ernest; "I most certainly, for one, shall claim the privilege of pleasing myself in the matter."

"You don't mean to say as how you don't intend to pay your footing, surely," cried Johnson.

"I mean to say," said Ernest, quietly, yet firmly, "I shall not give you one single halfpenny to spend in drink; so now you know what you have to expect."

"D—n thy young cheek, then. Thou'rt the skinniest young devil as ever I've comed across for a precious long time; blowed if thou ar'nt. I say, Jones"—addressing a young man with sandy hair, a pimple-spotted face, and who was attired in a pair of blue and whitish breeches that looked as if they had been made by his great great grandfather's brother's uncle's grand-mother to preserve bolsters in, so baggy and shapeless were they—"here's Milman won't stand treat."

"The devil he won't!" exclaimed Mr. Pimple-faced, Baggy-breeched Jones; "why, what's the reason?"

"Oh, I don't know," replied Johnson. "He says he won't; why, I can't say."

"Mr. Milman!"

Ernest turned round.

"Why won't you do as others do, and pay your footing, eh?"

"I do not see the necessity of throwing money away in such a foolish manner," replied Ernest.

"Why everybody stumps up, you know, on coming into the rooms."

"With everybody I have nothing to do; I act alone," said Ernest, quietly, as he moved away.

"D—n it; but, I say, Milman."

"Well?"

"If you don't pay your footing, we, we'll—"

"What?"

"We, we'll, won't we, Johnson?"

"Aye, by George, will we."

Ernest turned on his heel and walked away. He neither knew nor cared what the punishment was that Jones and Johnson threatened him with, in case he continued firm in his refusal to stand beer.

Such men, although they both held higher positions than himself in the warehouse, were below contempt. They were

nasty, dirty, ignorant, low-bred blackguards, both of them ; and of such are the staffs in the majority of Manchester warehouses composed ; for they can be got cheap, very cheap, dirt cheap ; and employers, in their wisdom, fancy that if they can get a man to work for a small salary, they are doing the thing at a low figure. And so they are, in one sense ; but they would do the thing at a much lower figure, if they were to pay decent salaries to able men ; for the work would be twice as well done, and every thing would be conducted in a much more business-like and satisfactory manner. But they don't, can't, and won't see these things. They think that the work gets done, and that therefore the staff is sufficient. They give their young men barely enough to exist upon, and think that they put the difference between good and bad salaries into their own pockets. They do nothing of the sort. They never think that their trade would increase if they kept a first-class staff of assistants, and never imagine but that their modes of conducting and managing their establishments are the

wisest, the most judicious, and the most politic modes ever discovered and followed out by mortal men.

Ernest, by refusing to pay for ales round, made enemies at once of the young men in the rooms ; but he cared not. He loathed the guzzling, swilling beasts, who were, by his refusal to pay a footing, done out of their drinking stir. He hated and abhorred men who were so lost to every sense of what is right and proper as to ask for money to buy ale with. And yet these beggars for drink, these miserable, animalised wretches, who were at any time willing to get beastly drunk at a friend's (?) expense, were nearly all in better situations than he was. They were, some of them at least, holding high positions and filling responsible posts in the warehouse.

The principal men were frequently held up by Mr. Brownlow as examples for the youths in the place to imitate.

"Look," he would say, "so and so came to this warehouse an apprentice; he has risen, as you see, to be first salesman. Do

as he has done, and you shall not be kept in a subordinate position, I promise you."

But, on studying the person and character of the man who has done such great things, the youth will, in nine cases out of ten, discover a middle-aged blackguard and a red-faced, done-up tippler. Am I to imitate that man, he will say to himself, that animal, that pig, that drunkard, that shouting, bawling, cursing, lying blackguard? Surely there must be some mistake. Mr. Brownlow could never, I am sure, wish me to sink so low. I must have misunderstood him. I will speak to him, and ask if I have not misunderstood him.

Really, my dear fellow, you are very green, very green indeed. Think you that the highest of all High Mightinesses, the head of a Manchester warehouse, will submit to be questioned by a stripling like you, will allow an understrapper like you to ask if you have not misunderstood him, as if his observations were not clear as noonday, and expressed in language simple, yet comprehensive—in a word, couched in terms so

admirably chosen as to be incapable of improvement? Misunderstand a Manchester man! Why, my dear fellow, Manchester men think that their remarks are the most admirable sayings that have ever been given utterance to. For clearness and brevity, they fancy them unequalled. And to even hint at the possibility of having misunderstood the observation of a Manchester man, would be a direct insult. The proudest of all proud men are the merchants of Cottonopolis; and the most ignorant of all ignorant men, are the purse-proud, wealth-worshipping, narrow-minded men of Manchester.

Imitate the red-faced salesman, however, you must, if you mean to get on; if you intend to get a connection amongst buyers. It is necessary that you should drink, that you should treat your customers, or you will not do a good trade; and if you cannot do a good trade, you are not a good salesman; and, if you are not a good salesman, you are not an efficient man of business; and if you are not an efficient man of business, why, you are no good, and you may,

as a wrathful governor would kindly observe, go to the devil and be d——d to you. It is the custom to treat buyers; and he who treats, must of course drink with those who are swilling at his expense, or he would not be considered “a brick;” and if a salesman be not considered a brick and a decent fellow, his rivals in business, who are bricks and decent fellows, will cut him out and knock his trade on the head.

A salesman, then, must drink, if he means to do any sort of a trade; and he must be a drunkard, a liar, and a humbug, if he means to be a first-class man. The salary of a first-class man ranges from £200 to £400, and this is the very highest point to be striven for. There is nothing beyond; no prospect, save that of dismissal when the constitution begins to break up; nothing to look forward to, save death, hastened by excess, and embittered by recollections of a life spent in getting together a connection for a Manchester firm, who, when weakness and incapacity overtook their servant, whose health and strength had been lost in their

service, gave him a month's notice, a great deal of cost-nothing advice, and permission to look out for another situation.

Such, then, are the men whose positions are to be striven for ; such the beings who are pointed out to the youths in Manchester warehouses as examples worthy of imitation.

Employers say to a young man, " Look there, imitate that man ; he has got together a large connection, and can command almost any salary."

We say, look there, that man is a black-guard, a drunkard, a liar, and a swearer ; imitate him—live the life of a beast, and die the death of a pauper—and you will stand a very good chance of keeping yourself warm in that hell, for admittance to which you have long been a candidate, and one not likely to be refused ingress on making known your many claims for a snug and comfortable corner.

Think you that masters care for their servants when incapacity overtakes them ? If you do, you think wrongly. They care nothing in the world about them. They

coin money out of their flesh and blood, as it were ; and when all has been got out of them that can by any possibility be obtained, they may go to the dogs as soon as they like.

Masters say to their salesmen, " Drink, for you cannot get together a good connection if you do not drink."

But when the health of those salesmen has fled for ever, they say, " You are drunkards—you will never be well again—a month from now you leave us—go."

And the men who have lost their health whilst putting money into their employers' pockets, are turned adrift in the world, and may beg, starve, steal, or blow their brains out, as they think proper.

It may be said that these statements are not true. I reply, by hurling back the lie into the face of him from whom it came.

They are true. As true as it is certain that there is a heaven above us—as true as it is certain that there is a hell beneath us, where sinners shall howl in the midst of roaring flames, for a never-ending eternity.

Hundreds and thousands of men have

been ruined, both for time and for eternity, through doing, and trying to do, a good trade for their employers, and hundreds and thousands more will yet be ruined in striving to carry everything before them, and in endeavouring to be d——d decent fellows, who do the thing well.

What an ambition for a man to be a “regular brick and no mistake,” in the estimation of any dirty, fat, little root, who can buy a fifty-pound parcel! What an aim in life for a being endowed with intellect! Better would it be to break stones on the highway, than to make a beast of oneself; for a man can break stones, and yet be a respectable man, and a Christian; but a drinking, swearing, commercial man, is anything but respectable, and most assuredly he is very far from being a Christian. He is in time a blackguard, and in eternity will be a devil; and that is the long and short of the matter.

Yet these are the men to be imitated by youths of intelligence and refinement, who may be desirous of improving their posi-

tions, and who may wish to elevate themselves in the social scale.

Amid what anomalies do we live!

Should my reader be a youth or young man in a Manchester warehouse, I would say to him—sweep the streets—wheel a sand-barrow—carry out butcher's meat—cry cockles alive O!—sell medicines that will cure all diseases incident to humanity, at Shudehill—do anything, sooner than throw away your health—part with your manly independence—drink, lie, and make a black-guard and a beast of yourself, in order to put money into the pocket of an ungrateful, unfeeling, grasping Manchester merchant.

Live like a man, not like a pig. Remember that he who helps himself, God will help, and never despair of one day or another emerging from the dark night of poverty and painful toil, into the broad, bright daytime of wealth, peace, and well-deserved prosperity.

In the soul-stirring words of Longfellow's "Psalm of Life," the most practical poem that ever was composed, and one that ought

to be engraven indelibly on the heart of
every young man living,

Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving—still pursuing,
Learn to labour, and to wait.

CHAPTER XVI.

ONE evening, when Ernest reached home, he found his mother in tears, and naturally asked her if she were unwell, or if any thing had occurred to put her out of the way, and so on. For some time she evaded the question ; but at last told him that she had been very much annoyed during the day, with one thing or another.

“ You know, Ernest,” said she, “ that, in spite of all my exertions to keep out of debt, we have been unable to pay our way as we went on. I owe now, to some seven or eight persons, something like ninety pounds ; and how it is to be paid, God knows, but I don’t. I have striven, and tried ; and better

tried, to avoid running into debt ; but it is all of no use. We must have certain things that it is impossible to do without ; and really every thing is so dear, that it takes half as much again to keep house, as it did eighteen months since. How the very poorest people—operatives and such like—manage to exist at all in these times, I cannot conceive. The very existence of a labouring man must be a positive burden to him. I feel, Ernest, as if I should sink beneath this sickening weight of debt. My strength seems to be failing ; and if I were to fall ill now, what on earth would become of us ? The grinding anxiety that I have borne up under so long, is now beginning to tell upon me. I have not the same spirit that I used to have in days gone by. Old age too is coming on, and my health, I fear, is going to break up altogether. You will allow, Ernest dear," added Mrs. Milman, looking fondly at her grave, silent son, who sat close to the table, resting his head on his clasped hands, " that I have some cause to be low-spirited. It is not right, however, for me

to trouble you with my annoyances ; for you have had a hard day's work, I'm sure, if your pale, worn face is any thing to judge by ; and here am I thoughtlessly talking away, when you, perhaps, are almost fainting for want of something to eat. But Sarah shall get your tea ready at once, and broil a little ham, and then—"

" Mamma," said Ernest, raising his head from its resting place, and turning his pale, thoughtful, and sad face towards Mrs. Milman, " did you not say that we were in debt ?"

" I did, dear ; but—"

" How, then, can I have ham to tea ?"

" Once in a way, however," began Mrs. Milman—

" Is once too much, Mamma," interposed Ernest, who rang the bell, and said to the servant, when she came in—" Sarah, bring tea in. Make some toast, but do not butter it. You need not bring the sugar in, as I shall not require any. There—~~make~~ haste."

As soon as Sarah had disappeared, Er-

then, turning to Mrs. Wilman, said, "Woman, I resolve never to see either Father, sister, or any similar luxury, until we are out of debt. You do not say anything, for it would be only a waste of words. I have decided, and by my decision I will abide."

Mrs. Wilman looked in amazement at her son, who was not in the habit of speaking in this manner. She saw the firm expression of his face, and felt instinctively that it would be an easier task to pull down St. Paul's single-handed, than to move Ernest from his purpose.

And so it would; for he possessed an iron will; and what he said, he meant, and would perform. To unobservant people, he appeared to be only a quiet, steady, and common-place youth; but beneath that staid demeanour there beat, unsuspected, the heart of a hero, who, if circumstances—over which he had no control whatever—had not kept him in the background, would have made a noise in the world, and eclipsed numbers of those, who, because either they themselves, or their fathers and relatives, were wealthy,

had obtained positions from which they looked down with contemptuous scorn upon all youths, who, like Ernest Milman, had to fight and struggle on in the world, without money, without friends, without anything on which to depend, save the clear heads and the strong hands that a good God had given them. A youth, however,—if made of the right stuff—is never the worse for having spent some time in the hard school of poverty. The insults that he is constantly receiving from addle-pated fools, prove to him that wealth is the only standard by which men are judged. He learns to despise men ; and he can never learn anything better. He feels the utter emptiness of all things, and is able to exclaim, with all his heart and soul, “ Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” Ease and pleasure are to him unknown : toil, and pain, and weariness, are his constant companions. These things, however, though apparently drawbacks and hindrances, are in reality only so many incentives to exertion. The greatest men who have ever lived, had, when young, to fight


against poverty, and to bear up under difficulties of every kind. The very fact of being poor, makes a youth, with any spirit at all in him, swear that in spite of every disadvantage he will some day or another become rich. Fools sneer at him—rich idiots look down upon him ; but he cares not, for he feels that he is their superior. He knows that—God helping him—he will, one day or another, sooner or later, rise far above such men ; for he feels that he has talents, that he has industry, and that he has a strong iron-like will, which will help him to overcome every difficulty, and which will enable him to surmount every obstacle that may be thrown across his path. The ridicule and scorn of those who possess more money, but less brains, than he does, only serve to brace him up to renewed exertions, and only cause him to devote himself more closely than ever to those studies and labours, which are destined eventually to raise him over the heads of those men who thought proper to sneer and snarl at him in his struggling days. There is no more comparison between a

brainless fellow, who, because he dresses in the height of fashion, thinks himself perfection personified, and a hard-handed, strong-minded, iron-willed man, than there is between the expressionless face of a barber's bewigged block, and the stern, strong, power-breathing countenance of the immortal Wellington.

A fop exists only—a true man lives. The one is simply a block for his tailor—an unsuspecting show-card, as it were; the other is—in a single word—a man.


Hands brown with toil and hardened by labour, are more to be admired than the whitest and most genteel-looking hands that were ever rubbed morning, noon, and night with Gerard's carefully prepared Almond Tablet. And yet some people say that red, rough, work-worn hands are vulgar, as if there were any vulgarity in a man's labouring honestly for his daily bread. There is a great deal more true vulgarity I imagine amongst the wealthier classes, than there is amongst the hard-working and heavy burden-bearing sons and daughters of toil.

There is such a thing as vulgarity of feeling, and the man who looks down upon his honest labouring brother, and regards him as inferior to himself, is—although he would laugh at such an assertion—in reality very much more vulgar than the man upon whom he looks down with a sort of thank-God-I'm-better-off-than-you-are air. Rudeness of speech and ungainliness of person do not make a man vulgar. There are as true gentlemen in feeling amongst working men, as there are in the most fashionable circles in the land. The gentleman—as he would call himself—who thinks men beneath him, simply because they have to labour for their daily bread, is unworthy of respect, undeserving of esteem, and will never be anything else than a paltry, pitiful, ignorant, narrow-minded wretch, who will drag on his weary life, uncared for, and unloved; and who will go down to his lonely grave, unwept over and unregretted. Toil ennobles a man, and raises him in the scale of being. Without it, nothing ever was done, and nothing ever will be done. The most emi-



nent men who have ever figured on life's stage have been the hardest workers.

Every young man then should devote all his energies to study the ins and outs, and make himself thoroughly master of the business or profession in which he is engaged. He must not half do it. He must not go to work with only half a heart and half a determination ; but he must firmly resolve, that, should it please God to grant him health and strength, no difficulties, however terrible they may appear at first sight, shall cause him to turn aside from his path—that no disappointments, however keen, shall cause him to slacken his exertions—that nothing but death, or complete helplessness, shall put a stop to his labours ; and he will as assuredly rise to eminence in his walk of life, as it is certain that—that the English and the French will thrash the Russians ; and that I apprehend is by every true-born Briton believed to be as sure as fate ; and which, by-the-bye, is as devoutly to be wished for, as that every sneaking, honour-disregarding, Bright ador-



ing peace-monger were drowned in the depths of the sea, or else tongue-tied, and turned into the streets, with the words humbug, sneak, coward, traitor, pasted conspicuously upon his back ; so that every patriotic and aggression-hating Englishman might point at him, and say—See, there goes a man who ought not to be suffered to give utterance to his cowardly and unmanly opinions ; for they may possibly, in these times of dear provisions, breed disaffection amongst the poorer classes—there goes one who is unable to think and judge for himself, and who must therefore follow the lead of John Bright, whose election will be an eternal disgrace to Manchester, and who deserves to be hissed out of England, for having made speeches, and written letters, that any man but himself would have torn out his tongue, and cut off his right-hand, sooner than have written, and given utterance to.

Out upon all little-minded peace-men, say I, who take precious good care of themselves—who look upon every thing in a pounds, shillings, and pence light—who

know not the meaning of the words National honour, and who are as unfit to be called Englishmen, as Cab-hacks are to be called Arab-steeds.

CHAPTER XVII.

As Milman and Leslie both lived in the same direction, they frequently walked home together, and on the way talked and argued about all sorts of subjects; or rather, Ernest expressed his opinions—and very singular they sometimes were—on any points which might have arisen in the course of conversation, or to which various circumstances might have given birth; whilst Leslie listened, hesitated, and finally assented; for he was one of that innumerable mass of people who are incapable of thinking for themselves; who are ready to be led by the nose by any one who will take the trouble; and who are born, live, and die, without

forming opinions of their own ; without attaining to any individuality of character ; and without doing anything, or thinking in any way different to the majority of their gaping, staring, dressing, dancing, smirking fellow-men. And yet Leslie was a gentlemanly young fellow, too ; but he had no stuff in him, no sternness, no strength of purpose, or firmness of determination. In fact, he was not at all the sort of youth to set the Thames on fire.

Now Milman was gravity, steadiness, perseverance, and strength, personified. He despised Leslie's character, taken as a whole ; but, at the same time, liked him for his amiability of disposition, and admired him for being so totally unselfish. If Leslie had been born to great wealth, and had therefore been placed in a position that would have rendered it unnecessary for him to devote his time to the acquisition of money, he would have been called a demmed decent fellow by fops, a charming young man by young ladies, and an eligible match by their mammas. He would have been just the sort

of man to suit worldly people ; an easy-going young fellow, who would have no objections to be toadied by money-worshipping sneaks, and who would submit to be plundered, right and left, by well-dressed fashionables, without caring a single straw, or speaking one word about the matter. But Ernest would have been a tougher customer to deal with. He was not to be humbugged by a set of fools—No. He knew the world and the world's ways, and he despised them from his inmost soul. The smooth-faced, smiling, and soft-spoken wealth-worshipper was more loathsome to him than the most disgusting reptile that ever crawled. He hated and abhorred sneaks, just as much as he admired and looked up to men of high intelligence and noble character. The pursuits of ordinary men had no attractions for him. He aimed higher and aspired to more than nine-tenths of his fellow-men. And yet these longings and aspirations had to be fed and nourished in the soul-chilling atmosphere of a Manchester warehouse ; where all that is fine and noble in a man is—unless he be of

a singularly independent spirit—driven out of him by unceasing toil, by uncongenial companionship, and by the overbearing and tyrannical conduct of his money-adoring and everything-else-despising masters. The man who can think, and plan, and hope, and aspire, amid the levelling scenes in a Manchester warehouse, is no common man—No. An ordinary man would sit down under his troubles and make the best, as he would say, of a bad bargain. And this is what employers like to see. They like to see their servants broken-spirited, hopeless, and despairing; for then they know that they have them fast, and that they may safely apply the screw, without any fear of the poor devils kicking. Oh, the misery and heart-sickening sorrow that a young man, possessed of fine feelings and a cultivated mind, has to pass through, during a series of years spent in a Manchester warehouse, is beyond the conception of those persons who have never experienced any of the chilling, blasting, withering influences, that—sweeping across the soul—bear away, or

destroy for ever, those fine feelings and pure emotions, without which, man drags on a miserable existence only, instead of living the life for which an all-kind Creator destined him. Hundreds upon hundreds of youths endowed with intellect, gifted with talents, and fitted in every way to fill high positions in the world, are lost for ever, through being placed in Manchester warehouses. Everything that is bad, and wicked, and low, is to be studied to perfection in a Manchester warehouse. The virgin purity of a youth's mind is sullied, even before he has been a single day in one of those hotbeds of vice. It is as impossible for a boy to retain his childlike innocence of everything that is bad, as it is impossible for the snow to lay upon the ground without being quickly speckled over with soot and dirt. A youth speedily becomes accustomed to, and is made acquainted with, language and conversation, which, if he had never entered a Manchester warehouse, would have caused the blush of offended delicacy to fly like lightning to his cheek. The most horrible oaths, and the

most beastly and disgusting expressions, soon become as familiar to him as household words. The name of woman is never mentioned without being coupled with some indecent remark or licentious observation. Habits the reverse of gentlemanly, and ideas the very cream of blackguardism, are contracted so firmly, and rooted so deeply, as to render it impossible for the poor depraved wretch to rid himself from them. And yet persons say and think, and firmly believe, that there is no place on the face of the earth where a youth, if steady and industrious, is so sure to get on as in a Manchester warehouse. Oh, why will people be so blind? Why will they—I say it deliberately—do their sons such grievous wrong as to send them to places where everything that is fine, and noble, and praiseworthy in their natures, is sure—unless they be almost more than human—to be withered, and blasted, and driven out of them?

I do not, however, mean to say that every youth who enters a Manchester warehouse will necessarily become a blackguard

and a scamp. No. But the chances are twenty to one that he will. The influence of home may perhaps restrain him from going to any great lengths in wickedness and sin, and the dread of exposure may keep him from giving the reins to his passions; but the sin-embers are smouldering in his breast, nevertheless; and may easily be fanned into such a flame as will consume him, body and soul, both for time and for eternity.

“But my son,” a mother may exclaim, “is not an ordinary boy, and cannot therefore be classed with other youths!”

“My dear madam,” I reply, “every son of every mother who was ever born into this world, is, or has been, thought by his maternal parent to be an extraordinary boy. Your son is, I doubt not, an intelligent and straight-limbed lad—but nothing more. I have not the slightest doubt in the world, but that if you place him in a Manchester warehouse, he will gallop hellwards on his sin-steed, in as mad haste as his friend and patron, the devil, could possibly wish. All

mothers think that their sons are prodigies but the reason of mothers is always blinded by their love. When I say that—to speak mildly—it is excessively injudicious to place a sensitive boy in a Manchester warehouse; and when I assert that the merchants of Manchester are overbearing, unfeeling, and uneducated men, let it be thoroughly understood that I speak of the bulk of warehouses, and the majority of merchants. There are merchants—all honour to them for it—who are exceptions to the rule; and there are warehouses in which a youth can keep himself—in some degree at least—out of the way of the sickening depravity that abounds to such a fearful extent in forty-nine mercantile establishments out of every fifty. But still, this I will say—and say it without fear of contradiction too—that no youth living can remain for twelve months in the best-conducted warehouse in Manchester without having the purity of his mind sullied, more or less; and without hearing expressions made use of, which ought to cause a sensitive and feeling youth to

shrink, shuddering, within himself. Therefore, if a mother wishes her son to preserve an unstained and uncorrupted mind, and if she earnestly trusts that he may cherish only in his youthful breast pure and chaste thoughts—let her never, under any circumstances whatever, send him to a Manchester warehouse.”

As Milman and Leslie walked homewards on the night in question, the conversation turned upon literature, or rather Ernest advanced his opinions upon literature and literary criticism; whilst Leslie strolled on by his side, more engaged in thinking about the fit of his gloves and the cut of his trowsers, than in listening to the assertions of his friend; which assertions, though slightly tinged with bitterness, and poured forth in rather a misanthropical spirit, were still sternly true, and full of practical and clear-sighted world-wisdom.

Ernest was at all times fond of musing upon things in general, and frequently indulged in speculations that would have caused him to be kicked out of fashionable

society, if he had ever ventured to intrude his free-thinking and treasonable opinions upon the attention of the empty-headed worshippers of style, wealth, and fashion. He thought for himself upon all subjects. Trusting to his reasoning powers and good common sense, he thought and thought upon any subject until he had thought the matter into a satisfactory and sensible shape; and then, having formed his opinion upon the question, he maintained it with unwavering tenacity, though every one else entertained quite a different notion of the matter, and ridiculed him for holding such preposterous and absurd ideas. But what did he care? Nothing. He had thought the matter out for himself, instead of taking any man's opinion for gospel; and therefore he knew that his idea was the correct and common-sense one. This mode of thinking about a subject, is, after all, the best way of arriving at a right conclusion of any matter.

"If you take up any paper, in which there are critiques upon new works," observed Ernest, in the course of his harangue, "you

read one article perhaps laudatory of a book, and another in which the author is unmercifully cut up and exposed to ridicule. Now, what is criticism?—and what are reviews? As I understand it, they ought to be judgments passed by professed literary men upon the artistic merits and demerits of a work. But are they so? Are one half of the reviews the true and unbiassed opinions of the judges of literature? I say no; and will maintain what I assert. A reviewer is very often bribed to write a favourable critique on a new work that may perhaps be one of the most wishy-washy productions that was ever conceived and brought forth by a senseless candidate for literary fame. That review will be read, and, as a natural consequence, the book, in praise of which it has been written, will be read also; and though the readers of the volume may not be able to discern any of the peculiar graces of composition which in the review are pointed out as perfect gems, and which in fact can scarcely be equalled—certainly not surpassed—in the whole range of English fiction, they

still will fly into raptures about the book, and declare that they have been perfectly enchanted with it—indeed it was a tale of thrilling interest, and—and that in one of the literary papers a reviewer had said that it was a perfect masterpiece of composition, and would, he felt assured, become a standard work, and be placed on the library shelves side by side with the immortal productions of England's greatest writers. Now, such a review must do harm—the fact is evident. Persons generally read reviews as they read their Bibles—without question, and without saying to themselves, is what I read here true? Again, a publisher may have a spite against an author, and write, or cause to be written, a condemnatory review of his work. Such a review, therefore, is considerably worse than nothing.

“Reviews are also written and inserted in the magazines and literary papers just in proportion as there is a demand for them. For instance, Charles Dickens brings out a new work, and every body must read a book if the name of Charles Dickens is tacked on

to the title-page. Every body, then, who pretends to be any body, reads it. After exclaiming, with raised hands and in voices rendered rather shaky with emotion after reading a pathetic bit—beautiful! astonishing! what a command of language the man has! dear-a-me, what graphic power do his writings evince (the last remark being cabaged from a penny paper that is taken in by Tom, and which, after having been read, and pawed, and thumbed by the elders, is treaced, and coffeed, and besmeared by the youngsters, from whom it descends to the maid-servants, who paw it, cry over it, and at last tear it up for curl-papers), the admiring readers of Dickens say—But what do the reviewers say about his new tale? They hunt about, then, for critiques on the book, and find that one and all agree in pronouncing it to be the most powerfully and beautifully written work that has ever issued from the English press. Why do they all praise it? Simply because no reviewer dare find fault with, or point out, the blemishes in Dickens's works; because, if he were to do

so, he would be ruined for ever. There is a demand for favourable critiques, and that demand must be attended to. The man who ventured to write, or insert in his paper, a criticism unfavourable to Dickens, would have to shut up shop very soon ; for his subscribers and readers would gradually fall off one by one, until there would be none left. Therefore, it is for the interest of a reviewer to write a favourable criticism on Dickens ; for otherwise he would not be able to obtain bread and cheese ; and reviewers, like other men, must live. And this is what is called reviewing ! Why it is, in a word, like many other things, a complete swindle and delusion.

“ It might be said that Dickens’s works are really masterpieces, and that therefore it would be unjust and unfair to cut them up. I apprehend, however, that if the first number of “ Little Dorritt,” about which the whole world is raving just now, had been written by an unknown man—one John Jones, for instance—it would have been rejected by every publisher in London.

But Dickens has a name, Dickens is the

fashion, and therefore Dickens must be admired; and laudatory reviews of his works must be written, for there is a demand for them.

“ Again, reviews, even if they are unbiassed, are simply the opinions of individuals with respect to the style and composition of a work, and the construction of a tale. The men who write literary criticisms may err in their judgments of literature; for, though they are called the high-priests of literature, they are still but human. Besides, they cannot judge of the effect that the perusal of a novel, for instance, may have upon any individual mind. They know only whether the narrative be constructed upon right principles, or arranged and drawn up in a manner contrary to art. But, of the effect produced upon the reader’s mind, they are unable to judge; and therefore their verdict, practically speaking, is of no earthly use. For, let a book be ever so artistically constructed, if it produce no practical effect, if it does not operate as it were on the reader’s mind, it is worthless. Therefore, I

mean to say that reviews, generally speaking, are useless.


“ I do not, however, presume to assert that there are no cases in which a careful perusal of well-written critiques on abstruse works would not be advantageous. Should the reviewer be an intelligent and well-read man, and one who has devoted much time and labour to the study of the subject on which the book treats, he will be able in an unprejudiced review to point out beauties, and throw light upon difficulties, that might otherwise have escaped the reader's eye, or have been passed over as incapable of solution. Therefore, in such a case a good review is undoubtedly a great help to the reader. But, when I say that reviews in general are nothing but publishers' puffs, that they are written as they are required, without any regard to the real merits of a work, and that for one fair, candid, and unbiassed critique, there are published ten reviews which are written according to order; still I speak within bounds, and do not

make a rash assertion that cannot be supported.

“ Authors pick out from paltry critiques such phrases as “a tale of thrilling interest” —“evinces great power”—“a remarkable production” —“worthy of the author’s genius”—“a fascinating tale,” and so on; and tack them on to their books in some conspicuous place or other, where a gaping reader may pore over them open-mouthed and wonder-stricken. This is very low, very low indeed! If a man’s book be good for any thing, it does not need puffing; and, if it be not good for any thing, puffing will not make it better. Therefore, why not let it go, to sink or to swim, as the case may be? But men are such fools. When a scribbler writes a book—if he be a born muff, that is—he marches about with his thumbs stuck into his armholes, and, with a sort of don’t-touch-me air, seems to say, “I’m an author—a man of genius—the composer of one of the most popular works of the present day, entitled ‘The Robbers of Robberton; or,

One-Eyed Joe;' a work, sir,—he will say," as he waxes warm—"that will hand my name down to the end of time; that will cause the young of future generations to say, what a man was he who wrote 'One-Eyed Joe!' Yes, sir, yes, when I am dead and gone, sir, they—"and here the conceited jack-ass will blubber, and whimper, and snivel, and finally walk away to boast and brag, and come the big, and blubber, and whimper, and snivel again to some other poor, unlucky wretch, who may be so unfortunate as to be met by the stuck-up humbug.


"Every one who can speak and write now-a-days, without making any glaring mistakes in grammar or composition, takes pen in hand, scribbles some rubbish, gets it printed, and dubs himself author. Poor, foolish fellow! But it pleases him, and does'na do me no hurt, as some one or another said; therefore, let him say what he has got to say, and then thank God that he is drained dry; for, as such men are not blessed with two ideas, they never can bore one a second time; that's a comfort.



“It has often struck me,” continued Ernest, who kept talking away, although Leslie walked on in silence by his side without speaking a single word, “that literary men—the leaders, that is to say, of the army of authors—must work very hard. Take Bulwer, for instance. Look at the number of volumes that he has written. Imagine the amount of mechanical toil alone that the mere writing of his numerous works must have cost him, putting aside altogether the labour of composition. And yet, take one volume, there will be about 350 pages in it. At the rate of only a page a day, which would not take more than an hour to compose and write, he could send forth a volume every year; and, therefore, the labour, great as at first sight it appears to have been, dwindles down to a mere nothing. What an amount of work a man might get through, if he were only to labour incessantly, and carefully husband every spare minute. Looking at the works of Scott, Dumas, James, Lamartine, Cooper, and others, we are astounded at the number of volumes that

they have written. And yet, upon reflection, we find that they are simply the results of regular daily work, which, though the quantity composed and written during a single day appears to be so very small and trifling, adds up at the year's end, and in the course of time swells out almost into a small library as it were.


“ Books, however, are not to be judged by the rapidity with which they have been written ; but by the matter which they contain. Cart-loads of novels, for instance, are annually published, which have been written hastily and without study, and are consequently good for nothing in the world, but to light fires with. One small volume, written with great care and replete with noble sentiments, will do more good than all the works that George Sand ever wrote. Therefore, the quality of a work, and not the quantity, is the standard by which a book ought to be judged. Floods of weak and trashy literature are annually poured forth from the press ; but one quiet, calm, little streamlet, bearing upon its placid sur-



face a healthy tone of pure thought, is of more value than all the turbid and polluted waters put together. I would sooner write one small volume that a youthful virgin might read fearlessly and without dread of the crimson flush—born of offended modesty—flying to her peach-like cheek, than affix my name to the fleet of immoral publications that George Reynolds has—to his eternal disgrace—sent floating into the world. And yet he is both an industrious and a talented man. If he had not been, he could never have composed the numerous works that bear his name on their title-pages. But how lamentably have his talents been wasted, and to what a miserable end has he devoted his extraordinary powers!

“I doubt not but that the opinions which I hold with respect to poetry would be ridiculed and laughed at by nine-tenths of the readers of odes, sonnets, idyls, and so forth. But I care not, I am happy to say, for ridicule and scorn. I go on my own way, and continue to think in my own manner. I maintain that, unless a poem contains


sentiments that are calculated to elevate, as it were, the mind of the reader, it is worthless. Shallow thoughts, even though they be clad in a word-garb of extraordinary beauty, are good for nothing. If the reader does not rise from the perusal of a poem a finer-minded man, if only for the time being, than he was when he sat down, that poem is not worth the trouble of skimming over ; in fact, it would be only a waste of time to read it. Through the medium of poetry there should be conveyed thoughts and ideas that ought to make the crippled soul expand, and that ought to cause the heart to proudly swell, as the entranced reader resolves to dare and do any thing, sooner than remain a nobody—a drop in the human ocean. When poetry is made up only of “dewy meads,” “fertile vales,” “perfumed flowrets,” “rose-strewn paths,” “starlit and cerulean skies,” and such like rubbish, it is fit only for sentimental and die-away young ladies, who love to wade through long pages of milk-and-watery verses, especially if the



cherished volume be bound in ultramarine, and embellished with charming vignettes. But for a man—an earnest, thinking, aspiring man—to waste his time in reading about “shepherds’ crooks,” and “moss o’er grown battlements”—bah! The man who reads weak poetry and exclaims as he rises from his seat, beautiful! admirable! sublime! astonishingly clever! and so on, is not worth a snap of the fingers,” concluded Ernest, as he suited the action to the word.

By the time that Milman had finished his harangue—for it was neither more nor less—he and Leslie had arrived close to the home of the latter. As they reached the door, goodnights were exchanged, and Ernest walked on alone. He strolled along at a slow pace, with his face downwards, thinking deeply. Something white, lying on the ground, attracted his attention. He stooped and picked it up. It was a piece of dirty paper, on which was traced, in a great sprawling hand—evidently the writing of an uneducated man—the following rude lines :

We are willing to work, but cannot
 With all our striving succeed ;
 And our care and our toil avail not
 Ourselves, wives, and children to feed.
 Midst want and misery woeful
 We drag on the long, weary days ;
 And, when dark-black agony, awful,
 Sweeps, cloud-like, across our ways,
 We groan, and we shudder, and sink
 Down deep into grim want's well,
 And our eyes flash, quiver, and blink,
 As we dash down headlong to hell.
 And no one cares, sorrows, or grieves
 Over the ruined and lost artisan,
 When this curse-stricken world he leaves,
 A heart-broken, toil-wasted man.
 But, instead of attempting to lessen
 The burden so heavy to bear,
 That crushes and weakens the workmen,
 And furrows the worn brow with care,
 The rich men, the great, and the mighty,
 Sip their claret, and talk about pay ;
 And their gay wives and daughters, flighty,
 Sail forth in the midst of the day,
 Decked out in silks, satins, and feathers,
 Bought with the blood, and the toil, and the sweat
 Of men who must work in all weathers,
 And be thankful for what they can get.
 May our curses on tyrants alight,
 Who so crush down, and grind, and spurn
 The men who from morning to night
 Have worked hard their wages to earn.



May the groans, and the sighs, and the tears,
 And the misery, fierce and deep,
 Be felt by the tyrants whose fears
 From their eyes drive sweet soothing sleep.
 May the curses of starving thousands
 Destroy, blight, and wither those men
 Who live and grow fat on their own lands,
 Without caring a fig for those men
 Who have toiled, laboured, and striven for them,
 Who are compelled to toil on for them yet,
 Who know what is meant by the word clem,
 As the pitiful wages they get
 Are not nearly sufficient to keep them,
 And, therefore, they know that the word clem
 Means hunger awful,
 And famine dreadful,
 With misery woeful,
 All things sorrowful ;
 Children crying
 For bread, bread ;
 And mothers lying
 Cold, stiff, dead !
 Curses blasting
 Light upon men,
 Who, for gaining,
 Grind and starve men ;
 Send to hell flame
 Men whose lives fair,
 Far above blame,
 Pure as fresh air,
 Show their tyrants,

Truly, clearly,
 That some men are
 Heroes nearly;
 Though their hands be
 Hard and horny;
 Though they may be
 Brownd and tawny.
 Curses deep, then,
 Curses deep,
 Light upon men
 As they sleep
 The uneasy sleep,
 Unlike a child
 Whom angels keep
 So gentle, mild;
 But like a demon,
 Restless, tossing,
 With his head on
 Pillows rocking.
 May woe and sorrow
 Overwhelm them,
 And death to-morrow
 Overtake them.
 And may they to
 Their dark graves go,
 And no tears flow
 As they down go
 To the eternal, scorching hell,
 That, when tolls their death knell,
 They'll see, and feel, and know well.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HENRY WILSON, of whom we have lost sight for some time, had been gradually becoming faster and faster, and had been by degrees drawn deep into the ruinous whirlpool of mad dissipation. From frequenting billiard-tables he had been led to frequent gambling hells; and from playing shilling and half-crown games, had advanced to staking bank-notes on the throw of a dice, or the turn of a card. He had also contracted habits of drinking, and from a young gentleman had sunk into a juvenile sot. As all these pursuits and recreations (!) required money, he had been compelled to apply to

his mother frequently for means to enable him to carry on his wild career of frantic folly. She—mother-like—could not imagine that the child of her prayers, the fair-haired boy who had lain in her bosom, and slumbered peacefully on her breast, would do anything wrong, or contract any irregular, unsteady, or disgraceful habits. His applications for money, therefore—frequent though they were—were never made in vain. The idea that her darling Henry might be in want of money was unbearable to Mrs. Wilson; and she, therefore, always complied with her son's demands.

The frequent supplies that he received from home were, however, insufficient for him. Having, by constant attention to business, been promoted by Mr. Graham to the post of under-cashier, Henry took advantage of his position, to appropriate to his own use certain sums that were the property of his employer. For some months, the thefts were undiscovered; but, at the annual stock-taking, it became evident to Mr. Graham that something was wrong some-

where; that some one had been tampering with the books. Suspicion however fell, as it too often does, on an innocent man, instead of on the guilty person. As the parents of Henry Wilson were wealthy, and as he had always, when in the warehouse, conducted himself in a steady and business-like manner, no one ever entertained for a single moment the idea of charging him with helping himself to his master's money. Upon investigation, however, the truth came out. It was made manifest that Henry Wilson had taken advantage of the confidence reposed in him, to enrich himself at his master's expense. Mr. Graham, as soon as the matter was made perfectly clear, sent for Wilson into his private office.

"Sir," said he, "you are a thief—you have robbed me. You—the son of a man whom I respect, have been guilty of embezzlement. Because I esteem your father, I shall not prosecute you. Go, and never show your face here again."

Henry Wilson, with burning cheeks, and head hung down, fled from the office.

In a handsomely furnished room sat a lady alone. On her lap lay an open letter. The contents were as follows:

Madam,

Your son, in whom I trusted, has robbed me. I have dismissed him. My reason for writing to you instead of to your husband, may perhaps be obvious to you. With expressions of regret for the pain that this communication will necessarily cause you,

I remain, Madam,

Yours, very truly,

C. B. GRAHAM.

Henry — a thief — my son — O God! — were the half-uttered exclamations that burst forth at intervals from Mrs. Wilson's pallid lips. Is this the end of my hopes for Henry? But — but — it is not — no — it cannot be true. I will not believe it — thief — my Henry — my son — my darling — no — slander, black slander. But — Mr. Graham — he — he — his signature — no — it's a forgery — a black hellish forgery. Rob — steal — believe my son a thief — never

—never—and with a piercing cry the unhappy lady sank fainting upon the floor.

Her husband, startled by the cry, came hurrying in. The open letter caught his eye. He laid it upon the table whilst he rang for assistance. The servants entered. Mrs. Wilson was carried off—still insensible—to her own room; and a messenger was at once dispatched for the doctor.

Returning to the sitting-room, Mr. Wilson again took up the letter; and, with blanched cheeks and starting eyes, read its peace-blasting contents.

He then slowly folded it up, put it into his pocket, and, with a low, deep curse, hissed through his clenched teeth, walked out of the room.

Mrs. Wilson never rallied. She gradually sank, and became weaker and weaker every day. In three weeks after receiving the fatal intelligence, she was laid low in the grave. Her husband lingered on, but never spoke to any one, unless he was compelled; never smiled, and never looked up from the hour on which he heard of his son's disgrace

to that on which he was carried to his last resting-place, by the side of her whose death had been caused—as his own had been hastened—by the sinful conduct of their once dearly-loved son.

As a gentleman who had been at an evening party was going home, about two o'clock one morning, he saw a woman standing near Victoria Bridge. She moved away as he drew near. Observing that she was not dressed like a street-walker, he accosted her, and asked if she had lost her way, or if he could render her assistance of any sort.

She turned towards him as he spoke, and, with flashing eyes, cried—"Begone. How dare you address me! Thank God, I'm not fallen so low yet. Go."

Asking pardon for having spoken to her, the gentleman turned away and proceeded homewards.

He looked back, however, before he had gone very far.

On a parapet of the bridge stood a female figure. He saw at a glance that it was the

woman from whom he had just parted. He rushed back.

Too late, however ; for, as he dashed on, the female—whoever she might be—flung out her arms, and, with a quick, despairing cry, sprang from the bridge into the black waters below.

In a few minutes the gentleman had procured assistance ; but it was some time before the body could be discovered. When found, life was extinct.

The corpse was taken at once to an hotel near, and search made for some clue that might point out the name and station of the unhappy suicide. The only thing that could be found was a letter, addressed to “ Mr. Henry Wilson,” who—as it appeared from the contents—had seduced and then deserted the unhappy girl ; for which, may hell eternal be his portion, and the portion of all those, who, after winning the affections of young females, ruin them, and then—after robbing them of that which, to women, is dearer than life itself, their honour—send them forth to beg, starve, or be-

come public prostitutes, as they may think proper.

No language can be too strong—no expressions too forcible—no denunciations too awful to make use of, when speaking about the devilish practice of seduction. The being who can coolly, and, according to a preconceived plan, rob a virgin of her honour, is not a man, but a black-hearted devil—a very hell-fiend incarnate. May every racking pain that can be imagined torture him to the very utmost, and cause his aching frame to writhe and twist about in torment inexpressible ; whilst, in awful agony, he groans and shrieks aloud in bitter anguish, both of body and of spirit. May the drops of pain-wrung sweat, that stand like beads upon his pallid brow, become blisters that shall wring every drop of life-blood from his coward heart. May the misery that he has caused be heaped ten thousand times ten thousand fold upon his sin-laden head. May he fail in everything that he undertakes ; and may he drink the bitter cup of poverty to the very dregs. May his wife prove faith-

less, and, with his children, mock, sneer at, and desert him. May sleep refuse to visit him; and may his food choke him as he attempts to eat. May misery, and pain, and sorrow be his deserved lot here; and may hell eternal be his everlasting portion hereafter!

There is no crime perpetrated on this sin-stained earth so black, so devilish, and so hell-deserving as the crime of seduction.

May an Omniscient God stretch out the right hand of his wrath, and, by striking down the seducer, prove to him that there sits enthroned above, One who, with more than fatherly care, keeps guard over those young and helpless creatures, who otherwise would be so totally friendless and unprotected.

May curses on him light,
 Who, with a heart black as night,
 Heeding, caring not for right,
 Stoops down from his manhood's height
 To deceive a loving girl;
 Who, in him trusting,
 Lists to him willing,
 And, with him going,
 Is soon seen struggling
 And fruitlessly battling,
 'Midst sin's engulfing whirl.

CHAPTER XIX.

FOR two long weary years did Ernest Milman toil on unceasingly, amid the dust and dirt of a grey-and-white room. He worked, and lifted, and carried, until his strength almost failed him. But still he toiled on; for he had sworn to deserve the promotion which Mr. Brownlow had promised him, in case he discharged the duties of his position to the satisfaction of his employers. Shutting his ears to the oaths which were so freely poured forth by his fellow-workers, and heeding not the extra labour, with which—in consequence of his willingness to work—he was too frequently

saddled, he toiled perseveringly on. Though, by sad experience, he knew that the word of a Manchester man counts for naught, when truth and money are to be weighed in the same scale, yet still he trusted that his meritorious conduct for five long years would plead somewhat in his favour.

With a beating heart, then, he went, on the last day of his apprenticeship, and at the summons of his employers, into the private counting-house.

"Shut the door, sir," cried Mr. Brownlow, as he entered.

Ernest closed the door.

"Your apprenticeship expires to-day, I believe."

"It does, sir," replied Ernest.

"Humph—well—you—we—that is—you may look out for another situation. Trade is bad, and we shall not require your services any more. There—you may go—now—at once, if you like."

Ernest stood aghast.

"Didn't you hear me, sir," cried Mr. Brownlow, seeing that Milman did not

appear to comprehend him. "You are no longer in our employ—you are discharged—go. Don't you understand me? Don't I speak plainly enough, sir—eh?"

"But—but your promises, sir, of——" began Ernest.

"Silence, sir," thundered Mr. Brownlow. "How dare you address me? Begone, sir, at once; or ——."

Ernest, casting one quick, indignant glance at the furious merchant, turned round on his heel, and, with scorn on his lip, and defiance in his eye, strode out of the office.

This was the act of an honourable (!), truth-loving (!), upright (!), Manchester merchant; who went to church twice every Sunday—who took the chair at public meetings—and who subscribed largely to Charitable Institutions.

Ernest went straight home. He told his mother all. She was unwell, and in bed. The shock completely prostrated her. For some days she hovered between life and

death. One evening, Ernest sat by her bedside. She appeared to be sleeping. Suddenly she started up.

"Ernest—my boy—love—strive to—God bless—" she cried, and fell back; her lips moving—her hands clenched—her whole frame quivering. Then a gurgle—a writhe—a shudder—and all was still.

She had gone to her eternal home, and Ernest was an orphan—friendless—penniless—hopeless—alone.

One evening, at dusk, there arrived at a small country town a pedestrian. He was young, and looked fatigued and travel-worn. He went straight to a cottage, and asked for a room and food. His wishes were at once attended to. The woman who owned the cottage asked him at what hour in the morning he wished to be called? He replied, "at seven."

At the appointed time, she knocked at his bedroom door. No answer.

A second time she knocked.

Still no answer.

Gently lifting the latch, she crept into the room.

Close to a table, with his bowed head resting on his chin and wasted hands, sat the stranger.

The woman drew near and touched him.

He did not move.

She spoke to him.

No reply.

Fearing she knew not what, she tried again to make him hear.

It was useless.

She then gently removed the hands from the stranger's face.

His head drooped—lower—lower still—then fell heavily upon the table.

The woman, who now saw that something was really the matter, gently raised the head, and gazed intently upon the face of the young unknown.

A thought struck her. She cast it aside at once. It returned. Again she gazed—closer—closer still—yes, it was true—he slept the sleep from which there is no awaking.

Instead of breakfast, he would require—
a grave.

The woman looked at the dead man, and, as she remarked his pale and thought-worn face, said to herself—“ Poor fellow ! he appears to have suffered much.”

Suffered ! Yes, he had suffered. He had worked, and toiled, and been discharged, and sworn at. His every hope in life had been blasted—his every prop had been swept away from under him—and his noble, manly heart had been broken. Oh, yes ; he had suffered, if ever mortal man did suffer.

The young, dead stranger was Ernest Milman.

THE END.

HOPE AND CO. GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET, LONDON.



